

Monastic Education in Late Antiquity

In re-examining the Christianization of the Roman Empire and subsequent transformation of Graeco-Roman Classical culture, this volume challenges conventional ways of understanding both the history of Christian monasticism and the history of education. The chapters interrogate assumptions that have framed monastic practice as pedagogically unprecedented, with few obvious precursors and/or parallels. A number explore how both teaching and practice merge Classical pedagogical structures with Christian sources and traditions. Others resituate monasticism within a longer trajectory of educational and institutional frameworks, elucidating models that remain central to the preservation of both Greek and Latin literary culture, and the skills of reading and writing. Through re-examination of archaeological evidence and critical rereading of signature monastic texts, each chapter documents the degree to which monastic structures emerged in close alignment with urban, literate society, and retained established affinity with Classical rhetorical and philosophical school traditions.

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Monastic Education in Late Antiquity

The Transformation of Classical *Paideia*

Edited by

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We are grateful to the Riksbankens Jubiléumsfond (the Tercennary Fund of the National Bank of Sweden) for generously funding both the conference and the MOPAI research venture that ran from 2009 to 2015. We likewise thank the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at Lund University for hosting the conference and housing the MOPAI project, and the University of Redlands for ongoing support of integral international collaboration. Additional thanks are due the scholars, whose contributions have allowed us to put together a volume that reflects a fundamental shift in discussions of monastic education. Their outstanding essays invite readers to rethink almost every aspect of emergent pedagogical investments, and to reconsider the degree to which monasticism influenced the late-antique educational landscape, as a whole.

In the process of organizing and structuring this content, the assistance of the MOPAI research team was invaluable. In the final stages of assembling the bibliography and cross-checking references, Sebastian Ekberg and Stephen Lars Klein’s close attention to detail was equally vital to timely submission of the collected essays.

Because this volume brings together scholarship that draws on a variety of methodologies and subfields (papyrology, material culture, literature), in a range of languages (Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic), with respect to citation, we have sought to maintain internal consistency in the format of each contribution. Beyond this, we have, implicitly, deferred to each author’s respective expertise in applying conventions appropriate to a given discipline.

As editors, we wish to thank Cambridge University Press for accepting the volume for publication, and Michael Sharp, Elizabeth Hanlon and Sarah Starkey for their generous assistance in facilitating the editorial process.



Introduction

LILLIAN I. LARSEN AND SAMUEL RUBENSON

In the process of the Christianization of the Roman Empire and the transformation of Graeco-Roman Classical culture into established Christian tradition, this volume considers the rise of monasticism as one of the most significant developments. As institutionalized monasticism emerged in the fourth century and manifested itself in a variety of forms over the next 100 years, the burgeoning movement increasingly engaged the attention of both emperors and bishops. By the sixth century, monasteries, and their leaders, were important actors in imperial, state, and local politics. Within the Christian community itself, monasteries rapidly became centers for the transmission and transformation of culture and literature – a role they gradually lost in the West in the medieval period, and in the East, only in the last century.

This volume disputes the assumption that expressions of Christian monasticism were unprecedented and simultaneously retained no obvious precursors and/or Graeco-Roman parallels. It presents, instead, monastic establishments as cultural and ecclesiastical centers that created an institutional framework largely responsible for the preservation and spread of not only Greek and Latin literature but also the skills of reading and writing. Within the structures that embodied monastic life, established conventions of agriculture, crafts, medicine, art, and architecture were also transmitted. As Classical sources and traditions melded with Biblical and monastic teaching and practice, existing norms were redefined and new structures of use were developed. In each arena, the importance of monasticism for the development of Christian culture, Western as well as Eastern, can hardly be overstated.

Traditionally, emergent monasticism has been studied through two primary lenses. One focus has explored the question of monasticism's roots and first representatives in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria; the other, developments within the Latin tradition. Less emphasis has been accorded the links that trace the development of practice in the East and the role played by non-Latin monastic traditions in preserving, transforming, and transmitting Classical and Graeco-Roman models to the broader Christian culture.

Recent studies have sought to widen the perspective by investigating individual actors and specific questions. Important sources have been made increasingly available in critical editions, but much work remains to be done. Many texts emerging from non-Latin monastic traditions of the fifth and sixth centuries have not yet been studied in full. Further, a large portion of this literature remains unavailable to scholars due to the lack of proper editions. As a result, fundamental questions about the rapid rise of monasticism; its social, political, and economic role in society; its relation to Classical philosophical thought and to patterns of education, social welfare, and communal organization remain largely unresolved.

Previous lack of research on developments in Eastern/non-Latin monasticism, and especially the role of the monastic tradition in the transmission of the Classical cultural heritage, is due at least in part to the fact that these emerging monastic strains have often been interpreted as a movement comprising poor and uneducated rural figures, with little or no knowledge of Classical and/or Christian intellectual tradition.¹ Grounded in an acritical, highly selective, and rather literal reading of the sources, this culturally biased viewpoint has relegated the early monks to the “desert” (or sometimes the “mountains”), where they remain disconnected from urban Late Antiquity. For many, these monks thus have little relevance as conduits in the transmission of Classical heritage.² Even in studies that have rightly emphasized the monks’ social role and civic interactions, such Eastern constituencies often remain outsiders, creators of and actors in a new and different societal order.³

Recent research on archaeological and papyrological sources,⁴ engagement with/interest in previously neglected monastic texts,⁵ and reinterpretation of older texts using new methods⁶ has dramatically challenged traditional

¹ Heussi 1936; Dörries 1949; Marrou 1956, and others.

² Although the relation between Greek *paideia* and emergent Christian culture is generally accepted on the level of ecclesiastical leadership and patristic literature, it is less common in the study of early monasticism. Similarly, while it is widely acknowledged that the major Christian patristic authors were steeped in Greek *paideia*, monastic authors are generally regarded as less literate, or even uneducated. For example, although recent studies of bishops of the fourth to sixth centuries put an emphasis on their education and dependence on Classical *paideia*, studies of monastic leaders tend to frame their protagonists as outsiders to Greek culture.

³ See, for example: Burton-Christie 1993; Gould 1993; Harmless 2004; and others.

⁴ See, for example: Bagnall 1993, 2009; Giorda 2010, 2011a; Larsen 2006a, 2013a, 2013b; Wipzycka 1996, 2009; and others.

⁵ See, for example: Brock 1995; Dahlman 2007; Harvey 1990; Holmberg 2013; Rubenson 1990, 1995, 2007; Sheridan 1998; Westberg 2010; and others.

⁶ See, for example: Brakke 1995, 2006; Dahlman 2013; Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997, 2002; Goehring 1993, 2005; Larsen 2001, 2008, 2013a; Lundhaug 2010; Pevarello 2013; Rapp 2004, 2010; Rönnegård 2010, 2013; Rousseau 1985, 2000; Rubenson 1990, 2013a; Rydell Johnsen, 2007, 2013; Westergren 2012; and others.

understandings of emergent monasticism. An increasingly broad range of evidence indicates that early monastic practice, at least in Egypt and Palestine, was well integrated into the commercial, political, and intellectual life of the cities, and some portion of its proponents were educated members of the upper social classes. Education, literacy, and literate communication are mentioned in the earliest monastic sources;⁷ likewise, papyri and school texts found at monastic sites in Egypt offer new insight into the foundational character of literary investments and activities.⁸ The texts that emerge from the early monastic movement, as well as the contents of the earliest monastic libraries testify, moreover, to the presence not only of Biblical material, but also the availability of a broad range of philosophical and theological literature.⁹

The present volume is a further step in the ongoing reinterpretation of the rise and early history of monasticism in the East. As such, it embodies and expands existing research aimed at contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of emergent monasticism in the transmission of Classical pedagogical models that began in Antiquity and extended into the Renaissance.¹⁰ In pursuing these ends, the volume also presents a reformulation of basic theoretical approaches, vigorously arguing against models that have often depicted Christian, and more specifically monastic, thought as inherently antithetical to Classical culture. It likewise resists presenting Christian and Classical Antiquity as inherently different entities.¹¹ Instead, included essays examine the growth of Christian literature and monastic culture in conversation with Greek and Latin precedents. Expressed through continuous reinterpretation and reintegration of existing models, this results in the melding of Classical and Biblical texts in Christian religious life and practice.

Many of the volume's essays consider early monastic texts ranging from inscriptions and notes on ostraca and papyri to philosophical treatises. Others examine ancient Christian texts that discuss early monasticism and read monastic source material as part and parcel of the society in which these texts were created – that is, a society steeped in Classical *paideia*. The broader aim, however, involves viewing texts and contexts as part of the re-evaluation of monastic educational and literary

⁷ Larsen 2013a. ⁸ Larsen 2006a; 2013a; 2013b; Cf. Criboire 1996, 2001; Bucking 2007, 2012.

⁹ Emmel and Römer 2008; Klingshirn and Safran 2007; Kotsifou 2007; Maravela 2008; Roberts 1979; Rydell Johnsen 2007.

¹⁰ Cf. Criboire 1996; 2001; Morgan 1998. ¹¹ Cf. Marksches 2006.

traditions, and locating monasteries within the gradual reorientation of schools in Late Antiquity. Examining emergent monastic pedagogies relative to increased social and geographical mobility¹² and in dialogue with the challenges caused by political, economic, and social changes¹³ affords new insight into the reshaping of genres, literary forms, and styles, and the reinterpretation of moral and philosophical teaching. Within this framework, the transformation of Classical into Christian *paideia* is seen as a reformation rather than a revolution. In turn, emergent conflicts between the monastic and Classical tradition are interpreted as manifestations of competition and rivalry within a culture, not as a conflict between opposing cultures.¹⁴

The first part of the volume discusses both the basic issues of Greek educational terminology and the rhetorical use of education in selected early Christian texts. The final part turns to discussion of the manuscript transmission of monastic sources in broader cultural settings. Parts II through IV are structured in relation to conventionally established levels of education in Antiquity. The papers included in Part II address questions of functional literacy and elementary education. In Part III, essays explore monastic evidence for grammatical and rhetorical instruction. Contributions introduced in part four assess the evidence for philosophical training within monastic settings.

In Part I, Samuel Rubenson introduces discussion of *The Language of Education*. Against the more traditional view of monasticism as unrelated to the Classical school tradition, Rubenson explores the degree to which emergent monastic educational and philosophical sources use the same basic terminology for the conditions, practices, and steps of monastic formation as found in established models of Hellenistic education¹⁵ and Classical *paideia*.¹⁶ Reiterating the overarching questions that have guided the team's broader research focus, Rubenson emphasizes the importance of moving beyond constructs that place schools and monasteries in opposition, underscoring the degree to which a fresh look at the evidence demonstrates that the emergent monastic tradition ought to be understood as an educational movement, and monasteries viewed as centers of instruction.¹⁷ Narrowing Rubenson's more general focus, Peter Gemeinhardt addresses the issue of education in the reception history of the *Life of Antony* (arguably the most influential text used to support claims for monastic opposition to learning). Comparing the educational layers of

¹² Cf. Watts 2006. ¹³ Cf. Becker 2006. ¹⁴ Rubenson 2013b; Urbano 2013; and others.

¹⁵ Larsen 2013a. ¹⁶ Rydell-Johnsen 2013. ¹⁷ Larsen 2001; 2006a; 2006b; 2008.

argumentation in the Greek text with two early Latin translations, Gemeinhardt explores the reshaping of philosophical emphases in the *Life*, arguing that Evagrius of Antioch changes these to emphasize content and moral formation in order to suit his well-educated Latin elite readership. Andreas Westergren addresses a second argument often used in support of monastic illiteracy by considering the Church historian Socrates' descriptions of the early monks, relative to their involvement in the first Origenist crisis. In this essay, Westergren demonstrates that these depictions of monks are, in fact, framed by a nuanced and balanced discourse about *paideia*. He concludes that in Socrates' portrayal, the opposition between literate and illiterate monks is leveraged to criticize a politicized use of the masses (*hoi polloi*). The ideal society is one in which learned and unlearned live in harmony, a society governed by the learned; and the ideal monastic life is a life directed by the educated monks.

In Part II, *Elementary Education and Literacy*, Roger Bagnall introduces discussion by examining a broad cross-section of monastic letters. Addressing evidence that has traditionally been left out of discussions of monastic education, Bagnall analyzes the format, handwriting, style, and content of letters drawn from a number of monastic papyri collections. He argues that the writers, and most presumably the authors and recipients of the letters, manifest educational training at a level commensurate with bureaucratic roles in local administrative and business enterprise. Bagnall likewise suggests that, with certain variations, the letters display a familiarity with scribal conventions and some training in the specifics of Christian epistolography. Lillian Larsen takes this discussion in a more theoretical direction. Returning to themes addressed in the first part of the volume, Larsen examines the ways in which long-standing interpretive emphases have influenced the identification, collection, and categorization of monastic pedagogical texts. Testing an alternate rubric for engaging the material record of monastic education, she demonstrates the importance of recognizing both the stability and fluidity of "form" and "content," while attending to both "text" and "context" in documenting monastic reuse of established pedagogical models. Anastasia Maravela's paper evaluates the evidence for the presence and use of Classical school texts – here Homer and Menander – in monastic environments. Giving particular attention to material remains of Theban provenance, Maravela argues for the presence of educational activity, and explores the degree to which it was based on Classical models. She suggests that such activity was

presumably directed towards monks and novices lacking a literate background. The question of “if,” and “to what extent,” elementary education took place in the monasteries is raised in both Larsen and Maravela’s papers.

Part III, *Grammar and Rhetoric*, takes up the question of monastic involvement in more advanced training. Blossom Stefaniw’s and Ellen Muehlberger’s essays re-examine the educational practice of two fourth-century Christian teachers/monks – Didymus the Blind and Evagrius Ponticus, respectively. Mark Sheridan’s paper addresses the degree to which training in rhetoric is evident in the writings/teachings of a less familiar figure, Rufus of Shotep, a sixth-century monk who became a bishop. Stefaniw’s close reading of the Tura Papyri introduces this section. Drawing examples from the extant corpus of Didymus’ classroom notes, Stefaniw challenges established tradition in arguing that Didymus the Blind was more likely a Christian grammarian than an ecclesiastically appointed teacher of catechumens. Echoing themes that likewise surface in Larsen’s rereading of the “elementary” record of monastic pedagogical remains, Stefaniw suggests that what distinguishes Didymus from the grammarians of Classical *paideia* is not the contexts, methods, forms, or even subjects of his instruction, but rather the literary examples he employs. By integrating the Bible into the social space previously reserved for the pagan classics, Didymus’ position as a grammarian is best understood not in opposition to his ascetic and monastic network, but rather commensurate with it. Muehlberger’s analysis of the rhetorical methods employed by Evagrius Ponticus strengthens Stefaniw’s assessments. As Muehlberger examines Evagrius’ writing in light of well-documented rhetorical structures, she addresses the question of whether the methods that govern Evagrius’ use of *ethopoeia* should be understood within the context of a program of monastic formation. Muehlberger concludes that Evagrius, like Didymus, far from creating a specifically Christian rhetoric deploys established educational practice but replaces Classical *exempla* with Biblical figures. Sheridan places similar emphasis on the continuity that characterizes the use of classic rhetorical forms in Coptic literature from Late Antiquity. Through analyzing structures that govern the text-based homilies of Rufus of Shotep, he draws numerous examples from Rufus’ Coptic corpus to elucidate applied practice. Sheridan concludes that his protagonist hardly fits the stereotype of the uneducated and rustic Coptic monk. Rather, Rufus’ ready command of sophisticated rhetoric attests the presence of rhetorical influence in Upper Egyptian monastic settings through at least the seventh century.

In Part IV of the volume, *Philosophy*, the relation between the Classical tradition and early monasticism is discussed from three different perspectives. Again, returning to themes taken up in Part I, Henrik Rydell Johnsén examines the ideal of being uneducated as it appears in Classical philosophical texts, elucidating the degree to which images of the rustic philosopher have their roots in broader teaching. Highlighting examples of the rejection of *paideia* and of books in Epicurean and Cynic sources, Rydell Johnsén argues that the weight monastic sources place on virtue rather than education does not isolate monasticism from Classical pedagogical emphases. Rather, it affirms the monk's role in continuing this tradition by naming certain forms of education – especially what comes to be called the *artes liberales* – as useless for real spiritual progress. Arthur Urbano likewise accentuates the importance of recognizing a shared philosophical tradition that links the monastery with its contemporary counterparts. In his analysis of two biographical works of the fifth century, Theodoret's *Historia Religiosa* and Marinus' *Life of Proclus*, Urbano suggests that these biographies should be seen as elements in a struggle over the appropriate reception and authority of a shared heritage – in this case, the teachings of Plato – rather than the expression of different ideals. Daniele Pevarello, in turn, explores an alternate strand of the same shared heritage as he reconsiders the transmission of Classical source material that links the *Sentences of Sextus* with later Christian expression. By comparing different stages in the reuse of *Sextus* by Christian ascetic teachers, Pevarello argues that the *Sentences* became a vehicle for transmitting Classical philosophical teachings into the monastic milieu. He simultaneously details the process by which a pagan text, through minor changes, is transformed into a source attributed to a Christian bishop.

In Part V, *Manuscript and Literary Production*, discussion turns to how monastic education is manifested in the process of textual transmission. Britt Dahlman highlights the value of heeding the fluidity that characterizes monastic texts, arguing that apparent variations in extant manuscripts should not solely be understood as evidence for a practice in which texts were corrupted by scribes. Rather, adducing *comparanda* from Classical literature, she suggests that early monastic sources may well have been revised and republished by the authors themselves, as different versions prepared for different audiences. With examples drawn from the *Historia Lausiaca*, and the writings of Cassian, two major sources on early monasticism, Dahlman traces the reshaping of this content in collections of miscellaneous texts used for monastic

formation. Building on Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana's foundational work, Dahlman critiques established tendencies that give primacy to ideal, standardized versions and dismiss partial texts preserved in non-standard collections.¹⁸ She argues that by focusing on standard editions of presumed original versions of monastic texts, scholars run the risk of missing both the creative work that has shaped non-standard collections and the rich value inherent in very old versions preserved in manuscript traditions not affected by later revisions. In their consideration of the Nag Hammadi Codices, Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott employ a different, but related critique of textual approaches that privilege idealized models over actual manuscript evidence. Drawing on close, detailed analysis of the colophons included in the codices, Lundhaug and Jenott argue that the codices are marked by the same literary forms apparent across a broader spectrum of early monastic manuscript tradition. They suggest that irrespective of the contents of individual texts, the codices preserved in the extant Coptic collection should be read in light of monastic literary production of the fourth or early fifth centuries, and thus afford an important additional source for the study of monastic education. Jason Zaborowski's essay, the volume's final contribution, explores complementary themes over a longer chronological trajectory. He examines how one collection of the monastic *apophthegmata* continued to be used as a basic educational text within a new cultural context. Presenting a range of examples that document a second period of transition and transformation, Zaborowski introduces a new generation of translators who adapt the monastic "classics" to an Arabic-speaking audience, shaped by yet another emergent set of linguistic and cultural norms.

Zaborowski's contribution brings the conversation full circle, as discussion returns to one of the collected essays' core issues, the persistence of established forms and traditions across linguistic and cultural borders. Like early Christianity, early monasticism has too often been imagined as something radically new and independent of its cultural and historical setting, only gradually being influenced by it.¹⁹ The contributions of this volume support an alternative image in which the historical setting is gradually transformed by changes in literary references as well as political and social developments. Through detailed analysis of material evidence and theoretically informed revisions of previous assumptions, the contributions document the striking continuity that characterizes how education

¹⁸ Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997; 2002; and others. ¹⁹ Cf. Larsen 2001; 2006a.

was understood and practiced across generations – from Classical school settings to the monasteries of Egypt, Palestine and Syria. As manifested in both extant remains and transmitted literature, the monks did not distance themselves from established educational models, whether elementary, grammatical, rhetorical or philosophical, but rather used these forms in dialogue and competition with one another and with non-monastic contemporaries. Through active engagement in the pursuit of education and literary production, new generations of monastic “citizens” were formed. In fostering monastic “civic” space,²⁰ the early monks lived with and used Classical *paideia* to create what would become the central institutional agent of Christian and secular education, in both the East and the West.

²⁰ Larsen 2006a, 2008, 2013a, 2013b; Cf. Westergren 2012.

PART I



The Language of Education

1 | Early Monasticism and the Concept of a “School”

SAMUEL RUBENSON

At the end of his classic *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité*, Henri Irénée Marrou discusses the rise of the monastic school, which he dates to the fourth century. His examples are the classical ones: Pachomius, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Jerome, mentioning in passing also the Desert Fathers.¹ According to him, the monastic schools were a new type of school, having “none of the features of the old classical school.”² They remained, moreover, peculiar to their own environment and had little outside influence. These schools were ascetic and spiritual, “less concerned with learning than with forgetting the poetry and secular knowledge they had picked up in the schools before conversion,” and created out of the sheer necessity of teaching the children who were “adopted” to read parts of the Bible in order to memorize them.³ The schools were, according to Marrou, only for young monks: both Basil’s and Chrysostom’s mention of the admission of other children were exceptions that were soon abandoned since it was both impractical (!) to send children to the desert and a threat to the peace of the monks to have children around. Thus, this practice was finally forbidden by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.⁴ Before turning to the developments in the West, Marrou concludes, “This is one of the most characteristic features of Eastern monasticism: since the monasteries were part of a society which on the whole always maintained a high standard of education, they were not obliged to adopt an educational role for which they had never been designed. Instead of becoming study centres they endeavoured to remain homes of asceticism; instead of trying to influence the world, they tried to get right away from it.”⁵

In spite of radical changes in our understanding of early monasticism⁶ and a more nuanced and complex image of education in Late Antiquity,⁷

¹ Marrou 1956: 330–4. ² Marrou 1956: 330. ³ Marrou 1956: 330.

⁴ Marrou 1956: 332–3.

⁵ Marrou 1956: 333. For a critical reassessment of the reference to monastic education in Marrou, see Larsen 2013a: 60–2 and her contribution in this volume.

⁶ See *inter alia* Bunge 1983; Rousseau 1985, 2000; Rubenson 1990, 2012; Goehring 1993, 1997; Wipszycka 1994, 2004; Brakke 1995; Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997; McVey 1998; Larsen 2001, 2006b, 2013a; Sheridan 2002; Caner 2002; Crislip 2005; Rydell Johnsen 2007; Kotsifou 2007.

⁷ See Morgan 1998; Cribiore 1996, 2001.

this image of a dichotomy between city and desert, studies and spirituality, has remained persuasive. In studies of Late Antiquity the school and the monastery are still worlds apart, and studies of education in Late Antiquity generally pay only cursory attention to the monastic movement.⁸ Monasteries, located in the desert and shut off from society, seem to have had almost nothing to do with education except for the presence of some children who might have been there. The purpose of monasticism, spiritual progress through asceticism, cannot have had a need for general education and real studies.

The purpose of my chapter is not to discuss the detailed evidence that radically questions this dichotomy and its underlying interpretation of the rise of monasticism. This has already been done in a number of publications and is described in some detail in the contributions to this volume.⁹ Thanks to that work we now know much more about the close interactions between the early Egyptian monasteries and the world,¹⁰ the presence of children in the monastic context,¹¹ teaching activities and school texts found in archaeological material from the Egyptian monasteries,¹² the literate activities of the early monks, and the relation between monastic and philosophical moral teaching.¹³ Instead, I want to focus on two fundamental, more general issues: what is meant by the term “school” in a Late Antiquity context, and how does this relate to what a “monastery” is designed for, to use Marrou’s expression. My questions are not whether there were schools in the monasteries, but whether the monasteries were in essence schools; not whether education took place in the monastic setting, but whether monasticism was in itself an educational movement rooted in previous school traditions.¹⁴ Instead of checking the evidence from monastic sites and traditions against a general concept of what a school is, I want to discuss the concept in the light of the monastic texts.

What is a school? In his history of education, Marrou describes the school as an invention of the late fifth century BC characterized as the

⁸ See Morgan 1998; Cribiore 2001; Too 2001; Watts 2006.

⁹ See Rubenson 2012, 2013a, with references to the earlier studies by Goehring, Larsen, Rönnegård, Rousseau, Rydell Johnsen and Wipszycka.

¹⁰ Goehring 1993; Wipszycka 1994. ¹¹ See Schroeder 2009: 317–38 and Giorda 2017.

¹² See Larsen 2006a, 2013a plus Larsen and Maravela in this volume.

¹³ Rubenson 2012. See also Rydell Johnsen 2007 and 2013.

¹⁴ The importance of monasticism, and in particular monastic groups at the fringes of Classical *paideia* such as women and non-Greek-speaking Christians, for the emergence of Christian education is discussed on the basis of an analysis of early Christian hagiography in Rubenson 2000. On education and schools in monasteries, see Larsen 2006a and 2013a.

result of a move from education as a private and intimate relationship between a master and a disciple to a collective and institutionalized interaction between teachers and pupils, a move linked to a new emphasis on practical skills that required the use of tools and texts, as well as different methods of training.¹⁵ Marrou’s use of the word “school” to characterize what was invented by this move, and consequently its characterization, is, of course, formed both by his own modern understanding of what a school is or ought to be, and the highly idealized picture of the Classical school of our literary evidence.¹⁶ Based on his work and on the same sources, numerous other studies give the same fairly coherent image of the ancient school system, its three levels, its methods, and the content of the teaching.

Although recent scholarship has been critical of Marrou’s idealized description of the schools in the late Roman Empire, what is to be defined as a school is usually taken for granted. The sources, material as well as written, used to analyze the schools in the period are selected based on a specific understanding of what is to be considered a “school” in Antiquity. This understanding is in turn based on a modern conception revised on the basis of the sources thus selected, but not really questioned. There is, however, as is clear from our texts, no fixed terminology in Greek equivalent to “school” or “education” in a modern sense. Both *scholê* and *didaskaleion*, the two most common words, are related to very general concepts of study or devotion, and teaching or instruction in general.¹⁷ Without a step back to reflect on what we mean by it, there is an obvious risk that we end up with a circle definition, where school is defined on the basis of the schools studied, which in turn were selected on the basis of that definition, thus eliminating alternative school settings. Therefore, a corollary to our rethinking of early monasticism ought to be a rethinking of the school in Late Antiquity.

Given the identification of monasticism as a “philosophical life,” a useful point of departure is the more recent work on the character of philosophical schools in Late Antiquity with their emphasis on practice, on the teacher as model and spiritual guide, and on the closed social networks and importance of tradition.¹⁸ In his close reading of biographical accounts

¹⁵ Marrou 1956: 39–40. ¹⁶ See Gemeinhardt 2007: 12 for a similar evaluation of Marrou.

¹⁷ See διδασκαλεῖον, διδασκαλία, and διδάσκω in LSJ 420–1 and σχολάζω, σχολαστήριον, and σχολή in LSJ: 1747–8.

¹⁸ See Hadot 1981 and Watts 2006, 2010, and 2013, and for the monastic connection, Rydell Johnsén 2007, 2013, plus Pevarello and Rydell Johnsén in this volume.

of philosophical teachers in Late Antiquity, John Dillon vividly describes a life with many features similar to those in descriptions of early monastic teachers.¹⁹ Crucial for our rethinking is his emphasis on the simple and informal character of the “school,” its connection to the household, students’ contribution regarding provision of food, ideals of communal living, a mixture of students and visitors, the importance of written correspondence, and the role of benefactors.

As my contribution to such a rethinking, I would like, however, to take a step back from the details and look at some of the basic characteristics of education as such, independent of its well-known forms. As basic characteristics, I suggest a withdrawal from production for a considerable period of time, the transmission of ideals and skills from teacher to student, a system of step-by-step progress through training, and a supportive framework of economy, authority and physical setting, referring to these four characteristics under the headings Leisure, Tradition, Exercise, and Organization in the following, and I offer some suggestions on how early monasticism relates to them. My hypothesis here is that our preconceived understanding of what a school is and especially the scholarly tradition about schools in Antiquity contribute to the difficulty scholarship has had in regarding emergent monastic tradition as an educational movement and the establishment of monasteries in a wider sense, as an innovative continuation of Classical school tradition.

Leisure

It might seem strange to talk about leisure as the first characteristic of the school, but the word “school” itself derives from the Greek noun σχολή (*scholê*), meaning basically “leisure, rest, ease”; consequently, it also implies “that in which leisure is employed,” especially “learned talk, discussion,” and further also the group engaged in this, the “school.”²⁰ The background is the simple fact that learned discussion, attention, and study require that one is free and undisturbed. More common than the noun is the related verb σχολάζω (*scholázō*) meaning basically “to have leisure” or “have time to devote oneself to something.”²¹ Although perhaps foreign to the understanding of what a school is in a modern society, it is enough to look at agrarian culture in Africa or in Europe 100 years ago to understand that

¹⁹ Dillon 2006. I wish to thank the anonymous reader who drew my attention to this article.

²⁰ LSJ: 1747. Lampe 1961: 1361. ²¹ LSJ: 1747, Lampe 1961: 1360.

a basic requirement for a school is that there are children and young adults who are relieved from manual work to pursue their education, that there are teachers with the freedom to engage in studies, being supported by others for their subsistence, and that there is a surplus used to pay the teacher for his work. Education presupposes that time is set apart for it and, as a consequence, that other things are not done. Education requires relief from production and a withdrawal from other obligations. Thus education is most often a class marker, a sign that you are not dependent solely on your own work to survive but are allowed or have the freedom to devote time to intellectual pursuits.

This semantic connection between withdrawal and leisure on the one hand and attention and devotion to studies on the other is not only a basic economic and social fact, but also idealized in Classical literature. The strong emphasis on moral formation, of forming the ideal free citizen, meant that a Classical education in Late Antiquity was closely linked to ideals of independence, of freedom from obligations in order to engage in the pursuit of true knowledge. The essence of learned discussion and study, philosophy, should ideally be an activity that is free from any worldly concern, an activity requiring unlimited devotion and thus total leisure. It required turning one’s attention to what is of benefit for the soul. This leisure, *otium* or σχολή was for the privileged.²²

In early Christian texts we encounter the same emphasis on the necessity of being “undisturbed” in order to be “devoted to.” We thus often find *scholázein* in connection with prayer, for example in the epistles of Paul, “to be undisturbed for prayer,”²³ or in Ignatius of Antioch, “to devote oneself to prayer” or “to God.”²⁴ But leisure might also come at the wrong time or be used in the wrong way. The canons of the Council of Laodicea state that Christians should not rest, *scholázô*, on the Sabbath, but, if possible, on Sunday.²⁵ Leisure does not in itself provide benefit. In his Homily on Psalm 45, Basil of Caesarea discusses the meaning of *scholázô* in the verse “Be still and know that I am God.”²⁶ First, Basil argues that the basic meaning of *scholázô* is “to be free,” which means to avoid being engaged in affairs foreign to God. Anyone thus engaged is choked by the

²² In Catherine Chin’s analysis of how Cassian uses the concept of leisure (*otium*), she points out that Cassian follows Seneca, who sees the *otium* of the elite as positive, since they devote it to intellectual pursuit, but the *otium* of the lower classes as sheer idleness. See Chin 2006.

²³ ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ (1 Cor. 7:5).

²⁴ προσευχαῖς σχολάζει Ign. Polyc. 1.3; θεῷ σχολάζει Ign. Polyc. 7.3. ²⁵ Can. Laod. 29.

²⁶ σχολάσατε καὶ γινώτε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός· Ps. 45:11 (LXX), Basil, *Hom. in Ps. 45*. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Greek and Latin quotations are my own.

pleasures of this world as the seed is choked by the thorns in the parable in Matthew 13. But from a lexical study of two other Biblical usages of *scholázō* (Ex. 5:17 and Matth. 12:44), Basil draws the conclusion that there is good as well as bad *scholê*. The good *scholê* is the one producing the peace needed for salvation, the worthless *scholê* is the “leisure of the Athenians, who spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new,” quoting Acts 17:21 (although the text in Acts has the non-Classical word *eukairéō* (εὐκαιρέω) instead of *scholázō*). He goes on to chastise those who imitate this and misuse their leisure in search of the discovery of some new teaching. This kind of *scholê*, he says, is dear to unclean and wicked spirits, who are said (Matth. 12:44) to return and find the house “unoccupied,” *scholázonta* and are thus able to enter. Leisure, *scholê*, is necessary, but requires a purpose, needs to be filled with something.

In early monastic texts such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum* *scholê* and *scholázō* are used in both a very general sense of leisure, often with negation as “being busy,”²⁷ and the more specific sense of attention or even study. Withdrawal, ἀναχώρησις (*anachôrêsis*), and stillness, ἡσυχία (*hêsuchía*), and thus leisure, are fundamental to monastic life, as is obvious from the thematic organization of the *apophthegmata*, most probably created already at the beginning of the sixth century, as well as the similar arrangement of the steps of monastic life by John Climacus somewhat later, where withdrawal was seen as a prerequisite for subsequent progress in learning.²⁸ As in the philosophical schools, this leisure is a matter of freedom from social obligations and bodily concerns in order to attend to the soul. This is spelled out, for example, in the *Vita Antonii* in a comment on Antony’s lack of concern for his bodily needs:

He said, “It is necessary to give all attention to the soul rather than to the body, and out of necessity accord the body little attention, devoting oneself fully to the soul seeking its benefit.”²⁹

²⁷ *Inter alia* AP/G Achilles 1, AP/G Gelasius 4, AP/G John Colobos 30, AP/G Poemen 4, AP/G Sisoës 27. The following abbreviations of the various collections are used: G = *Collectio Graeca Alphabetica*, in Cotelier 1677; PJ = *Collectio Latina Systematica interpretibus Pelagio, Iohanne et anonymo*, in Rosweyde 1615; GS = *Collectio Graeca Systematica*, in Guy 1993–2005.

²⁸ For the systematic organization of topics in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (AP), Cassian, and John Climacus, see Rydell Johnsén 2007.

²⁹ Καὶ ἔλεγε χρῆναι τὴν πᾶσαν **σχολήν** διδόναι τῇ ψυχῇ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ σώματι καὶ συγχωρεῖν μὲν διὰ τὴν ἀνάγκην ὀλίγον καιρὸν τῷ σώματι, τὸ δὲ ὅλον **σχολάζειν** τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὴν ταύτης ὠφέλειαν ζητεῖν (Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 45, ed. Bartelink 1994).

The same idea is echoed in the dialogue of John of Lykopolis in the *Historia Monachorum*, where John is quoted as using the same Psalm as Basil of Caesarea, saying:

It is necessary that the mind of those who seek God is free from everything else, for he says, “Have rest and know that I am God.”³⁰

The importance of how one spends one’s time, of what one attends to, recurs throughout the *apophthegmata*, both negatively in stressing that the monk has no time for things of this world, and positively, that the task of the monk is to give his attention to prayer. We also find the same warning as in Basil’s homily where he quotes the Gospel, in sayings emphasizing the necessity of being occupied:

Another of the fathers said, “A person must always have something to work at within himself. If he is **occupying himself** with the work of God, the enemy comes by from time to time, but he finds nowhere to stay. If, on the other hand, somebody is found to be the prisoner of the enemy, the Spirit of God frequently visits him; but if we accord him no place, he goes away.”³¹

Leisure should thus not be equated with freedom in the sense of emptiness or idleness. In accordance with Classical cultural ideas, *scholê* or *otium* should have a purpose and be seen as a noble task or even work, but not a work conditioned by necessity. Although our early monastic texts acknowledge the need to work for one’s own living, the emphasis is on bodily work and routine as means to prevent idleness.³² Thus, a monk needs to work and earn his own living not only to acquire freedom but equally as much to prevent leisure from becoming empty laziness, and thus receptiveness for demons. The elite ideal of leisure is echoed in an emphasis on work not having a purpose of its own, that the monk does not make it a priority. Work is not seen as a complement to devotion, a task separated from it. Work is rather idealized as the method to protect the mind from going astray, to keep one’s thoughts under control:

³⁰ . . . δεῖ οὖν τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων **σχολάσαι** τὴν γνώμην τῶν τὸν θεὸν ἐπιζητούντων. **σχολάσατε** γάρ, φησί, καὶ γινώτε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός (*Hist. Mon.* 1.27, ed. Festugière 1971).

³¹ Εἶπε ἄλλος τις τῶν πατέρων ὅτι· Δεῖ πάντως τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔχειν ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ ἐργασίαν. Ἐὰν οὖν εἰς ἐργασίαν Θεοῦ **σχολάξῃ** παραβάλλει αὐτῷ ὁ ἐχθρὸς μίαν μίαν ἄλλ’ οὐχ εὕρισκει τόπον μείναι. Ἐὰν δὲ πάλιν εὐρέθῃ ὑπὸ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ παραβάλλει αὐτῷ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ πυκνά· καὶ ἐὰν μὴ παρέχωμεν αὐτῷ τόπον ἀναχωρεῖ. (*AP/GS* X.168, ed. Guy 1993–2005: 120–2). Translation: Wortley 2012: 183.

³² In her analysis of Cassian’s use of the Latin equivalent of σχολή, Chin points out that Cassian sees *otium* reserved for an elite, the Egyptian monks, whereas the Gallic monks need rules in order to pray. See Chin 2001.

Abba Agathon was asked, “What is best: physical labor or the care of the interior?” and the elder said, “A person is like a tree; now, bodily labor is the leaves, the care for the interior is the fruit. According to what is written, ‘Every tree not bearing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire’ [Matt. 7:19] – thus, it is clear that our total zeal is for the fruit, meaning the care for the mind; but there is also need for the shelter and ornamentation of the leaves: these are the bodily labors.”³³

Work should not detract the monk from his devotion to God, and should thus not require much attention. In the radical manner of the sayings, the ideal monk is so attentive to his relation to God that he forgets what he is doing:

It was said of him that once he was plaiting cord for two baskets, but he made it into one basket. He did not notice until it touched the wall, since **his thoughts were devoted to contemplation.**³⁴

Withdrawing in order to attend to what is most important, and the depiction of this as a quest, a learning or a contemplation, clearly links early monasticism to education and what we would think of as part of what a school is all about. In a very few places *scholê* is even used more specifically to refer to education, to monastic life as a school, as in the monastic hymn in praise of *hesychia*:

O, stillness, a school for prayer and a school for knowing.³⁵

Tradition

In addition to leisure and undisturbed attention, *scholê* in a more limited sense also refers to the group of students and teachers involved, as well as to the tradition taught. Without students, teachers, and a set of ideals and/or skills to be transmitted, we cannot talk about a school. Education is the transmission of ideals and knowledge from persons acknowledged to be

³³ Ἡρωτήθη ὁ ἀββᾶς Ἀγάθων, τί μείζον, ὁ σωματικός κόπος, ἢ ἡ φυλακὴ τῶν ἔνδον. Εἶπε δὲ ὁ γέρον· “Ἐοικε δένδρῳ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ τοῖνον σωματικός κόπος φύλλα ἐστίν· ἡ δὲ τῶν ἔνδον φυλακὴ ὁ καρπὸς ἐστίν. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, Πᾶν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται, καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται, φανερόν ἐστιν ὅτι διὰ τὸν καρπὸν ἐστὶν ἡμῶν ἡ σπουδὴ πάσα, τοῦτέστι τὴν τοῦ νοὸς φυλακὴν. Χρεῖα δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ τῆς ἐκ τῶν φύλλων σκέπης καὶ εὐκοσμίας, ἅτινά ἐστιν ὁ σωματικός κόπος (AP/G Agathon 8; text from *Monastica* (<https://monastica.ht.lu.se/>)).

³⁴ “Ἐλεγον περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἔπλεξε ποτε σειρὰν δύο σπυρίδων, καὶ ἔρραψεν αὐτὴν μίαν σπυρίδα, καὶ οὐκ ἐνόησεν, ἕως προσήγγισε τῷ τοίχῳ. Ἦν γὰρ ὁ λογισμὸς αὐτοῦ **σχολάζων τῇ θεωρίᾳ** (AP/G Ioannes Colobus 11, PG 65).

³⁵ ὦ ἡσυχία **σχολή** προσευχῆς καὶ **σχολή** ἀναγνώσεως. AP/GS II.35.

more advanced in experience, learning, wisdom or skills to those considered less advanced. The teachers hand over what they know to the students and assist them in achieving the same levels as they themselves have. There is thus need for both a tradition to be handed down and an interplay between those providing the tradition and those receiving it.

In the schools of Antiquity with their emphasis on moral and social formation, the transmission of the inherited tradition was paramount. There is no need here to repeat in detail and in examples what scholars have said about the importance of models, imitation, copying, and repetition in Classical schools. Beginning with the letters of the alphabet and single words and continuing with phrases, maxims, sayings, and models for how to compose speeches and letters, examples were used and copied.³⁶ The Classical role of the teacher was first to be an example himself, not only, or even primarily, in knowledge, but also in character and behavior. What was to be transmitted was not something technical, something external to teachers and students, but something internal, a moral and social formation. For this, the teacher was the source, the guide, and the model.³⁷ It was fitting that the school bore the teacher's name.³⁸

This emphasis on both the teacher and the authors and characters of the texts as models is also evident in early Christian literature on education, from Jesus as the teacher in the gospels to Origen as the ideal in the oration of Gregory Thaumaturgos,³⁹ and even in the regular use of literary characters as models, from the Biblical characters to martyrs and saints.⁴⁰ Education is imitation of the living and the dead. The use of Classical literature by Christians thus became a recurring problem, most dramatically in the edict of Julian demanding that a teacher believes what he teaches and adheres to the models presented in the literature taught.⁴¹ The edict was clearly aimed at Christian teachers, as is evident from a letter in which he refers Christian teachers who do not believe in the gods to the church, where they can use the gospels instead of the Classics.⁴²

³⁶ Marrou 1956: 95–101, 221; Cribiore 2001: 8–9; Watts 2006: 1–21; and Larsen 2006a; 2013a.

³⁷ Watts 2006: 11–13 for the close social relations between teachers and students, and Valantasis 1991 for teachers as spiritual guides.

³⁸ See Dillon 2006 with references to the schools of Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus.

³⁹ On Origen and other early Christian teachers as models, see Valantasis 1991.

⁴⁰ See the contribution by Muehlberger in this volume for the monastic use of *ethopoeia* and the replacement of Classical heroes with Biblical figures.

⁴¹ *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.5 For a detailed discussion of the edict on the schools, see Downey 1957.

⁴² Julian, *Ep.* 36.

Turning to our early monastic material, this emphasis on imitation of the model is even more pronounced. In the *Vita Antonii*, the saint begins his career by paying close attention to and imitating a number of teachers,⁴³ and in the *Vita Pachomii*, we hear about how Pachomius begins his monastic career by living with and learning from an older monk.⁴⁴ Although often regarded as pioneers, neither Antony nor Pachomius is depicted as inventing or determining what is to be done on their own. Their way of life, moreover, is regularly described and defended by reference to Biblical models and imitation of martyrs and saints.⁴⁵

The importance of the teacher as the example and of education as imitation is, moreover, the crucial issue in the encounter between Antony and the philosophers, a key passage in the *Vita Antonii*. It is not the details of knowledge that are central, but rather, the identity of the teacher. Antony replies to the greetings of the philosophers, stating:

If you have come to a foolish man, your toil is to no avail; but if you think that I am wise, make yourselves what I am, for one ought to **imitate** the good. Indeed, if I had come to you, I would have **imitated** you; conversely, now that you have come to me, make yourselves what I am.⁴⁶

In contrast to ideas about the individual quest and solitary existence of the monk, our early monastic texts are permeated with the ideals of transmitting a tradition. The monk has to learn a tradition, imitate his master, repeat and do his exercises, and finally hand over what has been received and refined to his disciples. In the description of the establishment of a joint monastic life in the *Vita Pachomii*, it is made clear that it is based on a conviction that holiness is defined through imitation and not predestination. An angel tells Pachomius to minister to others in order to reconcile them with God: as a result, he receives novices and tests them, introducing them gradually to monastic life and teaching them how to follow the Savior. The reaction of the recruits is described as follows:

⁴³ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 3, 4. ⁴⁴ *Vit. Pach. gr.* 6–11.

⁴⁵ Antony for example is depicted as imitating Jakob (*Vit. Ant.* 1), the apostles (*Vit. Ant.* 2), Elijah (*Vit. Ant.* 93), and even the martyrs. For the role model of martyrs in the *Vita Antonii*, see Gemeinhardt 2012: 79–114.

⁴⁶ Εἰ μὲν πρὸς μωρὸν ἦλθετε, περιττὸς ὑμῶν ὁ κάματος· εἰ δὲ νομίζετε με φρόνιμον εἶναι, «γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ». Δεῖ γὰρ τὰ καλὰ μιμεῖσθαι. Καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐγὼ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἤρχομην, ἐμιμησάμην ἂν ὑμᾶς· εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς πρὸς ἐμέ, «γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ». (*Vit. Ant.* 72, ed. Bartelink 1994). Translation Meyer 1950.

They marveled and said to each other, “We used to think that all the saints were made holy and unswerving by God without regard to their free will, from their mother’s womb, and that sinners were not able to have life because they had been created that way. But now we see the goodness of God manifested in our father [Pachomius] who, although born from pagan parents, has become so dear to God and has clothed himself with all God’s commandments! Then we, too, and all men can follow him, for he follows the saints. So is realized what is written, *Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest*. Let us die with this man and we shall also live with him, for he guides us straight to God.”⁴⁷

This emphasis on education through personal imitation and formation by example is most pronounced in the tradition of sayings, where they are regularly presented as dialogues between disciples and fathers, or as edifying stories about ideal monks. The task of the master is to be an example:

A brother asked Abba Poemen, saying, “Some brothers live with me: do you want me to instruct them?” The elder said to him, “No, do your work first, and if they want to live (like you), they will see these.” The brother said to him, “But they want me to instruct them.” The elder said to him, “No, be their **example**, not their **legislator**.”⁴⁸

The early monks are living examples and teachers, and in general they interact with disciples. They act as models and are asked to give words of wisdom; their disciples are asked to imitate and meditate on their words. But it is not only the depicted setting that is educational. As has been demonstrated by Lillian Larsen and others, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (AP), the sayings of the desert teachers, can themselves be understood as educational texts, as providing material for the training of a monk.⁴⁹ The formation and reformations of the collections of sayings, as well as their reception in later texts such as Dorotheus of Gaza and the letters of Barsanuphius and John, also show how they function as foundations for teaching, as the embodiment of the tradition. In a manner quite similar to how the teachers were revered almost as divine figures in the philosophical school

⁴⁷ *Vit. Pach. gr.* 25. Translation Veilleux 1980.

⁴⁸ Ἀδελφός ἠρώτησε τὸν ἀββᾶν Ποιμένα, λέγων· Ἀδελφοί οἰκοῦσι μετ’ ἐμοῦ· θέλεις κελεύσω αὐτοῖς; Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Οὐχί· ἀλλὰ ποιήσον πρῶτον τὸ ἔργον, καὶ ἐὰν θέλωσι ζῆν, ἑαυτοῖς βλέπουσι. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀδελφός· Θέλουσι καὶ αὐτοί, Πάτερ, ἵνα κελεύσω αὐτοῖς. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Μὴ· ἀλλὰ γενοῦ αὐτοῖς **τύπος**, καὶ μὴ **νομοθέτης** (AP/G Poemen 174, PG 65).

⁴⁹ Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2013a.

tradition of Late Antiquity, the fathers of the desert are depicted not only as role models, but also as almost divine masters:⁵⁰

Abba Moses used to say in Scetis, “If we keep the commandments of our fathers, I promise you by God that the barbarians will not come here. If we do not keep [them,] this place will be deserted.”⁵¹

Exercise

The third characteristic feature of a school that I would like to highlight is the need for exercises in order to progress. The success of a school depends on the willingness of the pupils to do the required exercises so as to learn and to develop, but equally as much on the ability of the teacher to inspire and nourish these efforts. Not only the different skills but also the moral and social formation that is central to the school require training and exercises. In Classical Greek, this training is expressed by three closely related concepts *ἄσκησις*, *μελέτη*, and *γύμνασις*, where the first has the broader meaning of training, the second refers to the exercises needed to learn, particularly the necessary theoretical and rhetorical exercises, and the last designates primarily physical exercises. But as shown by Frank Hieronymus, they are often used synonymously to mean the exercises needed to perform a certain skill, or rather to become someone in whom the skill is established as a virtue, habit or ability.⁵²

The Classical school may be seen as the place in which these exercises take place and are organized. In accordance with a basic idea of progress the exercises are introduced step by step for the purpose of forming the student according to a model. The texts that preserved the tradition were to be read and digested in a specific order.⁵³ Education in Antiquity was thus basically a progression along a specific path divided into different levels. This progress required effort, and the student unwilling to struggle could not achieve the results that would indicate that he or she had reached a certain level.

⁵⁰ For the reverence for the teachers in the schools in Late Antiquity, see Urbano in this volume and Watts 2010.

⁵¹ “Ἐλεγεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Μωϋσῆς ἐν Σκήτει· Ἐὰν φυλάξωμεν τὰς ἐντολὰς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν, ἐγὼ ἐγγυώμαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, ὅτι βάρβαροι οὐκ ἔρχονται ὧδε. Εἰ δὲ μὴ φυλάξωμεν, ἐρημωθῆναι ἔχει ὁ τόπος οὗτος (AP/G Moyses 9, PG 65).

⁵² For a detailed analysis of the Greek vocabulary for learning exercises, see Hieronymus 1970.

⁵³ See for example Dillon 2006: 408–9.

In early Christian literature, we encounter the same terms in relation to various forms of piety, knowledge, and practices.⁵⁴ In order to make progress in spiritual life, a Christian must exercise, γυμνάζω (*gumnázō*), train ἀσκέω (*askéō*) the soul, and study μελετάω (*meletáō*) the word of God.⁵⁵ In authors such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, even life in this world is depicted as a school, or more properly a training ground for eternity.

There is no need here to speak about the use of *askêsis* for the training of the monk, only to stress that *askêsis* in early monastic texts is primarily a term for exercise, intimately connected with the idea of progress. In contrast to modern ideas about the role of asceticism, where there is an emphasis on asceticism as performance and communication,⁵⁶ the early Egyptian monastic texts clearly use the words to indicate methods of training and learning, precisely as in Classical texts. Although less common, the same goes for *gumnázesthai*. To an ancient author and reader, the use of these terms in the monastic texts linked them to education and schools.

These terms are used in a number of sayings in a very interesting way. In a saying attributed to Amma Syncletica, she lists a variety of difficulties in monastic life and how to learn to deal with them by certain teachings. She ends the list by stating:

Through these **exercises**, moreover, we **train** the soul, looking our adversary in the eyes.⁵⁷

But probably the most important and specific words connecting monastic teaching and Classical schools are *melétê* and *meletáō*. In Classical texts the terms refer to theoretical and mental exercises in preparation for performance and often indicate memorization, “engraving on one’s mind.” The term is frequently encountered both in the context of philosophical schools, coming close to what we would call meditation, and in the rhetorical schools, where it indicates the memorization and rehearsal of models of speech.⁵⁸ *Meletáō* is the basic method of learning, the constant repetition, memorization, and use of models.

⁵⁴ See for example the use of γυμνάζω and μελετάω in 1 Tim. 4:7, 17, and *Ep. Barn.* 4:11, 19:10, and the use of ἀσκέω in *Diogn.* 5:2, 12:5; *Ign. Polyc.* 9:1, *Herm.* 8:10, 2 *Cl.* 20:4.

⁵⁵ See the numerous examples in Lampe 1961: 243, 324, 840–1.

⁵⁶ See Valantasis 1998, Flood 2004, and Hagman 2010.

⁵⁷ Ἐν τούτοις μάλλον τοῖς γυμνασίοις τὰς ψυχὰς ἀσκηθῶμεν· ἐπὶ ὀφθαλμῶν γὰρ ὀρώμεν τὸν ἀντίπαλον (*AP GS VII.23*, ed. Guy 1993 = *AP/G Syncletica* 7).

⁵⁸ Hieronymus 1970, Rydell Johnsén 2013.

The common translation of *meletáo* as “meditation” in the monastic texts adds a pious and spiritual flavor that unfortunately distances the described practice from the schools, where “repeat, rehearse, and exercise” fit better:⁵⁹

Abba Ammos said, “With Abba Bitimios, we went to see Abba Achilles. We heard him **meditating** on this, saying, ‘Do not fear, Jacob, to go down into Egypt.’ For a long time he remained, making this **meditation**.”⁶⁰

should probably be translated instead:

Abba Ammos said, “With Abba Bitimios, we went to see Abba Achilles. We heard him **rehearse** this, saying, ‘Do not fear, Jacob, to go down into Egypt.’ For a long time he continued doing this **exercise**.”

Another important aspect of school exercises that is also central to the monastic setting is the systematization of what is to be studied and achieved, and the step-by-step organization of the progress. As in school, where the student moves step by step, learning how to master one skill after the other, monastic teaching regularly lists different skills, practices, and virtues to be mastered in a specific order. Such systems of organization are found in Evagrius of Pontus and John Cassian, in early collections of *apophthegmata* and most famously in John Climacus’ *Ladder*. As has been demonstrated by Rydell Johnsén, these systematizations of steps of learning have their roots in the Classical schools.⁶¹

This stepwise progress is visible not only in the organization of the material, but also in the texts themselves. The long sermon that constitutes the nucleus of Antony’s teaching in the *Vita Antonii* teaches how the monk can learn step by step to discern the workings of demons, methods that are later developed thoroughly by Evagrius of Pontus. In the *Apophthegmata Patrum* we also encounter examples of stepwise learning, even in daily practice:

He did it for three days and then suffered from *accidie*. So he found a few palm leaves and split them; the next day he began to make a plait from them. When he grew hungry, he said to himself: “Here are a few more

⁵⁹ For the concept of μελετάω in early monastic texts, see Rydell Johnsén 2013 and Rönnegård 2013.

⁶⁰ “Ἐλεγεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Ἀμμώης, ὅτι Παρεβάλομεν ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ ἀββᾶς Βητίμιος τῷ ἀββᾷ Ἀχιλλᾷ, καὶ ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ **μελετῶντος** τὸν λόγον τοῦτον· Μὴ φοβοῦ, Ἰακώβ, καταβῆναι εἰς Αἴγυπτον. Καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἔμεινε **μελετῶν** τὸν λόγον τοῦτον (AP/G Achilles 5a, PG 65). Translation Ward 1975.

⁶¹ Rydell Johnsén 2007.

palm-leaves. I shall lay them out before I eat." And after he had finished, he said: "I shall read a little before I eat." And after he had finished, he said: "I shall say a few psalms, and then I shall eat with an untroubled mind." So step by step he made progress with God's help, until he came back to the right way. And when he had received confidence against evil thoughts, he overcame them.⁶²

Collective Organization

A final necessary feature of a school is organization. It is, moreover, the analysis of the organization and structure of the Classical school system that has been predominant in previous scholarship. The general belief is that the basic structure and organization of education was a three-layered system, remaining essentially the same from the Hellenistic to the early Byzantine period. On the basis of her studies of the papyri, Raffaella Cribiore has criticized the image drawn from the literary evidence of a stable and well-structured school system, however, as too idealistic.⁶³ According to her, the forms, setting, and organization of schools differed according to the local situations. Some basic facts, however, do remain the same – I would like to look at three of these: the private character of education, the teacher as the locus of the school, and the physical setting.

As Cribiore points out, with a few exceptions, schools were private institutions and the entire financial burden of education fell upon the family, who had to pay the teacher in order to have the pupil admitted.⁶⁴ On the one hand this limited the number of children whose parents could afford schooling, and on the other made the teachers completely dependent on good relations with the families. For the philosophical schools, financial arrangements were left quite vague, as Dillon points out.⁶⁵ The strong connection between school and household, and the requirement that students contribute to the needs of the school, may indicate that some labor for the teacher's household was required from

⁶² *Qui cum fecisset tres dies, extaediatus est, et inueniens paucas palmulas, scidit eas; et iterum in crastino coepit plectam facere ex eis. Qui cum esurisset, dixit intra se: Ecce aliae paucae sunt palmae, explico eas, et manduco. Et cum perexpendisset eas, dixit iterum: Lego parum, et sic manduco. Et cum legisset, dixit: Dicam aliquantos psalmos, et jam securus manduco. Et ita paulatim proficiebat Deo cooperante, donec ueniret ad ordinem suum. Et cum accepisset fiduciam aduersus cogitationes malas, uincebat eas. (AP/PJ VII.27b, PL 73).* Translation Chadwick 1958.

⁶³ Cribiore 2001: 2. ⁶⁴ Cribiore 2001: 3–4, 59–65. ⁶⁵ Dillon 2006: 405.

the students. The early monasteries, whether cenobitic or semi-anachoretic, were also private institutions dependent on attracting disciples, and dependent on their contributions in money, payment in kind or work. As recent scholarship on children in the monasteries, as well as studies of monastic economy, has shown, the monasteries were closely linked to the villages and towns and economically dependent on an exchange with the surrounding society.⁶⁶ But a number of questions about how the monasteries were run remain obscure. An important matter is the question of the economic aspects of recruitment and admission. What contribution was required, for example, from those who came to the monasteries, and to what extent was there a financial investment by them or their families? The evidence indicates manual labor on the part of the disciples to contribute to the running of the institutions, but is this the entire story? As shown by Daniel Caner, there is much evidence to suggest that many monks depended on gifts in exchange for their services, among which teaching was probably the most significant. An educated monk would thus be a monk who could make his living and also contribute financially.

The second issue related to organization is the role of the teacher. Lacking an external institutional framework, the school in Classical Antiquity was the teacher, as Cribiore points out.⁶⁷ It was the teacher who set up the school, recruited students, received payment, and organized the physical location. When the teacher moved, the school moved, and when the teacher died or retired, the school was closed unless there was an appointed successor. As in the school, the monastic father, the abba, was in a sense the institution. He established the group and defined its geographical setting. If he moved, his disciples followed suit, and when he died, the community was dispersed unless a succession was in place, usually by the abba appointing his own successor. These moves and successions are prominent features in the *Apophthegmata*, most probably to put an emphasis on teaching lineage:

It was said of Abba Agathon that he spent a long time building a cell with his disciples. At last when it was finished, they came to live there. Seeing something during the first week which seemed to him harmful, he said to his disciples, "Get up, let us leave this place." But they were dismayed and replied, "If you had already decided to move, why have we taken so much trouble building the cell? People will be scandalized at us, and will say,

⁶⁶ For children in early monasteries, see Schroeder 2009b and Giorda 2017.

⁶⁷ Cribiore 2001: 18.

'Look at them, moving again; what unstable people!'" He saw they were held back by timidity and so he said to them, "If some are scandalized, others, on the contrary, will be much edified and will say, 'How blessed are they who go away for God's sake, having no other care.' However, let him who wants to come, come; as for me, I am going." Then they prostrated themselves to the ground and besought him to allow them to go with him.⁶⁸

As for the third aspect, the *locus*, we know much less, both in relation to the schools and to the monasteries. Where did the teaching take place? In her work on education in Egypt, Cribiore suggests a wide variety of physical settings for the teaching, ranging from official institutions such as temples, libraries, and markets, to private or rented rooms, or even streets and fields.⁶⁹ Referring to Peter Brown, John Dillon remarks that the nearest analogy to the philosophical school might be found in the Islamic centres of learning, where a master gathered his students in the mosque or a corner of its courtyard.⁷⁰

With fairly small numbers of students and only a minimum of resources, the requirements were small and a school could easily move from one place to another. This is similar to the image gained from our early monastic sources, but what stands out as characteristic for the early monastic movement is the fairly rapid move to the construction of communal buildings, some of them quite large. The best attested archaeologically, and from our sources the most important, of these communal buildings are the churches. My question here is whether we have been too influenced by our own understanding of what a church is, and how it should be used, to be able to think of the early monastic churches as places of teaching. Since prayers and readings, and even homilies, were part of the education of the monks, it seems natural that even other teaching activities could have taken place in the churches as they did in synagogues, Roman basilicas, and in the mosques of early Islam. Looking back at Cribiore's discussion of places for teaching, it is noticeable that the sites of the more important schools we

⁶⁸ Διηγῆσαντο περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ἀγάθωνος, ὅτι ἔμεινε χρόνον ἱκανὸν οἰκοδομῶν κελλίον μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ· καὶ τελειωσάντων αὐτῶν τὸ κελλίον, ἦλθον λοιπὸν τοῦ καθίσαι. Εἶδε δὲ εἰς τὴν πρώτην ἐβδομάδα πρᾶγμα μὴ ὠφελοῦν αὐτὸν, καὶ λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν. Ἐταράχθησαν δὲ σφόδρα, λέγοντες· Εἰ ὅλος λογισμὸν εἶχες τοῦ μεταβῆναι, τί τοσοῦτον κόπον ὑπεμείναμεν οἰκοδομήσαντες τὸ κελλίον; καὶ μέλλουσι πάλιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, σκανδαλισθέντες εἰς ἡμᾶς, λέγειν· Ἰδοὺ μετέβησαν πάλιν οἱ ἀκάθιστοι. Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτοὺς ὀλιγοψυχοῦντας, λέγει αὐτοῖς· Εἰ καὶ σκανδαλίζονται τινες, ἀλλὰ πάλιν οἰκοδομηθήσονται ἕτεροι, λέγοντες· Μακάριοι οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ὅτι διὰ τὸν Θεὸν μετέβησαν, καὶ πάντων κατεφρόνησαν. Πλὴν ὁ θελὼν ἔλθειν, ἔλθῃ, ἐγὼ τέως ὑπάγω. Ἔβαλον οὖν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος, ἀξιοῦντες, ἕως οὗ συγχωρηθῶσιν σὺν αὐτῷ ὁδεῦσαι. (AP/G Agathon 6, PG 65). Translation Ward 1975.

⁶⁹ Cribiore 2001: 21–34. ⁷⁰ Dillon 2006: 402.

know of are often located in and around temples. We could even ask whether the construction of churches as centers of monastic communities was as much a result of the need for places for teaching as for places of worship. Most probably the distinction between them was less clear than we usually think today.

Monastic Education

In a more general sense it seems clear that the early monasteries, whether cenobitic or semi-anachoretic, drew on educational traditions.⁷¹ In addition to the more general educational terminology discussed above, we also encounter references to the more specific terms for a school, namely *paideuterion* and *didaskaleion* in the contemporary sources.⁷² Even more significant, as shown by Lillian Larsen, is the educational evidence in the archaeological material that has been overlooked.⁷³ The question to ask is thus why this has not been generally recognized in literature on early monasticism. In a perhaps little-read article written some fifteen years ago, Philip Rousseau raises the issue of the role of the early monastic leaders as teachers contributing to the transformation of Classical *paideia*. Here he argues that a major reason for the lack of recognition of their role is that we are still laboring under the spell of Peter Brown and his famous article on the “Holy Man.”⁷⁴ The article ushered in an emphasis on what Brown termed “the role and function” of the holy man in ancient society in which the holy men, and thus the early monastic leaders, were seen as mediators, primarily between marginalized people and the elite but also between people in general and God. They were signs of a changing world in which the old systems of social and religious patronage had broken down. Although there was a new emphasis on their social role, Brown’s monks remained untouched by the traditional forms of authority and education.

Influenced by Brown’s image of the holy men, recent studies on the Christian appropriation and reuse of Classical education and the establishment of authority for Christian leaders have focused on the bishops.⁷⁵ Trained in the well-known forms of Classical education and in a position to

⁷¹ They might, as argued in Rubenson 2000, even be considered the first institutional forms of a Christian transformation of Classical education. For parallels between early monastic texts and the Classical rhetorical tradition, see McVey 1998, Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2013a, and Rönnegård 2010.

⁷² See Westergren 2012 and in this volume.

⁷³ See Larsen 2006a, 2013a, and her contribution to this volume.

⁷⁴ Rousseau 1999, Brown 1971. ⁷⁵ Sterk 2004, Rapp 2005.

use and transform them for the benefit of the church, they are seen as the initiators of a Christian *paideia*. This runs the risk, according to Rousseau, of neglecting the importance of the ascetic tradition and the monasteries as alternative spheres of authority in Christianity in Late Antiquity. Referring back to his article on Antony as a teacher, Rousseau points out that even in his *vita*, Antony is a teacher with claims to authority that do not depend on any social or ecclesiastical position, but on his own training and his own mind.⁷⁶ In studying how a Christian *paideia* is developed through transformation of the Classical education, we should not neglect the importance of the ascetic and monastic communities.

One early monastic community stands out as an exception by being regarded as a “school”: namely, the monastery of Seridos near Gaza. In the monograph of Ariyeh Kofsky and Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony entitled *The Monastic School of Gaza*⁷⁷ as well as in several articles,⁷⁸ the monasteries around Gaza are depicted as intellectual centers shaping a specific monastic tradition with its own characteristics. The focus is almost entirely on the ideas transmitted, however, and it is not clear whether the term “school” is used to describe only the tradition created or also the specific physical setting and methods that shaped and transmitted the tradition. Nor do we find any attempt to define whether and if so, how the “monastic school” of Gaza transformed existing educational patterns.⁷⁹ Evoking the comparison with the famous sixth-century rhetorical school of Gaza, the authors seem to indicate that the monasteries were schools in the same sense, but this is never clarified. The contributions by Pevarello, Stefaniw, and Rydell Johnsén in this volume suggest ways to gain clarification.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the early monasteries in the East share many of the basic characteristics of the contemporary Classical schools: what was fundamental for a school was also fundamental for a monastery. The monastic movement had the same emphasis as the school on the necessity for withdrawal, leisure, and undisturbed attention to learning and a focus on moral and spiritual progress. The monastic movement also shared the emphasis on transmitting a specific tradition using the same

⁷⁶ Rousseau 1999. ⁷⁷ Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2006.

⁷⁸ See for example Perrone 2004.

⁷⁹ See for example the references to μελετᾶν, Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2006:124, 157.

methods and even the same vocabulary for imitation, repetition, memorization, and various forms of mental and physical exertion. We find the same concern for progress and systematization of knowledge. The monastic movement seems, moreover, to have had in general the same informal character, mixture of audience for teaching, and flexibility in used space. We also find ample evidence for correspondence both within and between monasteries.

In a general sense there can be no doubt that the monasteries from the outset were a kind of school, albeit with their own agenda, qualifications, and recruitment. It is also evident that, although neglected by modern research, our early monastic texts use terms and concepts deeply rooted in the traditions of the schools, and probably also their methods and traditions. As evidenced in several contributions to this volume, early monasticism was less of a movement of solitary souls fleeing the world to be united with God and more of a communal enterprise searching for models of education. Not only do we find the presence of children, but also of school texts and professionally educated scribes.⁸⁰ Not only is there an interest in matters of education in the texts, but also evidence for well-educated monks.⁸¹ Although we should be careful in creating dichotomies between the Greek and the Latin context, the subtle changes made in the vulgate translation of *Vita Antonii* into Latin pointed out by Peter Gemeinhardt may indicate a difference between East and West in relation to monastic education.⁸² As is clear from the transmission of early monastic literature, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the *Historia Monachorum* and the works of John Cassian and Palladius, textual fluidity should be understood less in terms of scribal deficiencies and more in terms of adaptation to the practical use of the texts in their educational context.⁸³

⁸⁰ See the contributions by Larsen, Maravela, Bagnall, and Lundhaug and Jenott in this volume.

⁸¹ See the contributions by Westergren, Urbano, Rydell Johnsen, Stefaniw, Muehlberger, Pevarello, and Sheridan in this volume.

⁸² See Gemeinhardt in this volume. ⁸³ See Dahlman and Zaborowski in this volume.

Introduction

Early monasticism was a regional as well as an international phenomenon. While the first hermits were deeply rooted in their geographical and cultural environment – the Egyptian or, slightly later, the Syrian and Palestinian deserts – their influence soon extended beyond these regions. It goes without saying that this involved the writing and distributing of texts and their translation from Greek into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and other languages spoken in Late Antiquity in Christian areas. This process of translation would continue during the centuries to come, and inevitably this meant translating not only words but also concepts. Early monasticism could build on existing terminologies: for example, the concept of *ascesis* was popular in Hellenistic philosophy. But concepts like “monk” or “monastery” were innovations for which appropriate expressions had to be found first in Greek and then in other languages. Thus when looking at early monastic texts and their translations, the subject of education occurs on the level of word-for-word translation – how Greek terms were translated into Latin, for example – as well as on that which Claudia Rapp has termed “exegetical” or “cultural translation.”¹ This refers to the rendering of concepts in a different cultural and religious context, including the appropriation and selection of existing patterns of speech and writing. Such an investigation of “cultural translations” may lead to deeper insights into the question of whether literary education was useful or harmful for communicating ascetic values and lifestyles. The authors of such texts were, generally speaking, men of letters and were conscious of their literary abilities, while they knew at the same time that using literary skills for Christian purposes had been controversial from the second century onwards, due to the religious content of the school-texts, which were full of stories of pagan, i.e., false gods.

¹ Rapp 2004: 1227, 1251.

This applies of course not only to monastic texts but also to theological treatises, epistles, or creeds (the textual history of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds would be two cases in point). Monastic texts, however, often display an outright rejection of literary skills and advocate instead simplicity for the thoughts of the protagonist and the style of the author.² The Christian discourse on education in Late Antiquity is thus present in a special manner in such texts and, therefore, also in their translations. In the present contribution, I will investigate the discourse on *paideia* in Athanasius' Greek *Life of Antony* in comparison to the *Life's* Latin renderings. Such an examination of the translations of the text of the Greek *Life* into Latin will reveal the dynamics of the exchange of ascetic values and practices between East and West into a hermeneutics of asceticism, so to speak, which involves not only linguistics but also conceptions of Christian piety and the role of education in early monasticism.

The Greek *Life* was translated into Latin twice within two decades. Generally speaking, the first, anonymous version lacks stylistic elegance, while the rendering by Evagrius of Antioch not only displays the latter's rhetorical learning but also consciously accommodates the *Life* to the religious and aesthetic expectations of his audience – that is, educated Romans interested in ascetic texts and role models. If in the Greek *Life*, Athanasius does not absolutely reject Classical education but also appropriates it and even converts it for Christian purposes,³ then we should look for a second level of conversion of Classical education in the Latin version of this *Life*. I will thus first analyze how educational terminology is translated in the Anonymous' Latin *Life* and then examine Evagrius' concept of translation in regard to his methodological remarks and the concept of an educated ascetic life which emerges from his version. Finally, I will point out how my argument contributes to the overall subject of the present volume.

Education in the Greek *Life of Antony*

At the end of the fourth century, news had spread widely about “a holy and perfect monk from Egypt, about whom people praise, saying that he, lacking any command of letters, was able to keep in mind the Holy

² See Rydell Johnsen in this volume on the virtue of simplicity. ³ Urbano 2008: 887.

Scriptures and to understand them prudently by meditation only.”⁴ Thus wrote Augustine about St. Antony in the prologue of *On Christian doctrine*. This perception of Antony as an uneducated, illiterate hermit prevailed for many centuries to come. One might wonder why a prominent bishop like Augustine was so fascinated by the rude desert father and why highly literate people all around the Mediterranean enthusiastically welcomed the *Life of Antony* as a foundational text of Christian piety. Significantly, Jerome tried to replace Antony with Paul of Thebes and later with Hilarion of Gaza, who, according to Jerome, had been highly literate men before becoming hermits.⁵ Jerome’s attempt to establish himself as the leading author of hagiographical texts in the Latin world was not successful, however. Neither Paul nor Hilarion but instead Martin of Tours, himself *inlitteratissimus*,⁶ happened to become the “Antony of the West,” while Antony’s fame continued to spread. This was furthered by Augustine’s account of his conversion, triggered by the story of Antony’s decision to live an angelic life, and by John Cassian’s collations, and (without mentioning the hermit but constantly alluding to his *Life*) by Gregory the Great’s *Life of Saint Benedict*.⁷ Athanasius’ biography of the saintly hermit – a “rule of monastic life in narrative form,” as Gregory of Nazianzus termed it⁸ – appealed, as it seems, to its readers on different levels and did not suffer from its protagonist’s ostensible lack of education.

Looking beyond a superficial reading of the text, however, the topic of education is dealt with in a more nuanced way than might seem to be the case at first glance. This has received due attention in recent studies on the *Life of Antony*,⁹ and I wish merely to take up some basic aspects here. In particular, it has been observed that Athanasius’ Antony was capable of communicating by letter although he had not received formal education. The hagiographer thus did not intend to present an outright paradoxical picture (as presented by Augustine) but much rather advocated an elaborate concept of ascetic education that integrated not only the abilities of reading and writing but even some elements of Classical *paideia*.

⁴ Aug. *De doctr. chr. prol.* 4.8. ⁵ See Gemeinhardt 2010. ⁶ Sulp. Sev. *Vit. Mart.* 25.8.

⁷ For the Western reception of Antony, see Lanne 1992. ⁸ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.5.

⁹ See Rousseau 2000; Zanetti 2004; Gemeinhardt 2013. The topic of education or of a specific lack of it, respectively, is of course prominent in other monastic texts of the fourth century; for the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, for example, see the contribution of Rydell Johnsen to the present volume.

The topic of education in the *Life of Antony* has been discussed time and again with respect to the reception of philosophical biographies, popular in the Neoplatonism of Late Antiquity, by the first Christian hagiographer, Athanasius. Recently, Arthur Urbano has argued that hagiographical texts should be situated within the “arena of cultural competition” in Late Antiquity where Christian and pagan concepts of a philosophical life were presented and debated.¹⁰ This is certainly one important discourse which Athanasius chose to enter, albeit not the only one. I have argued elsewhere that the reception and critique of philosophical thoughts and texts should not be regarded as the foundational perspective on the *Life of Antony*, which is at least equally indebted to Biblical and martyrological texts.¹¹ But without any question, education forms one of the layers of argumentation within the *Life*, starting with the straightforward rejection of the Classical way of learning by young Antony and culminating in the defeat of philosophers by the hermit, who has been taught by God himself. Of course, there is much more that could be said about the theological capabilities of the “historical” Antony in the light of his *Letters*,¹² but for the time being, I will confine myself to the Greek *Life* and its author,¹³ and start with a short recapitulation of the subject of education in this text.

Antony, who had absolutely refused to attend public schools in his childhood, nevertheless became a famous teacher. This was, however, not the career path he had chosen himself: Antony was eager to imitate Christ first by living as a hermit and then by becoming a martyr during the persecution by Emperor Maximinus Daia in 311. But, contrary to his expectations, it was the Lord himself who taught the hermit what he had in mind as the proper way of imitation:

The Lord was guarding him for our own good and for the good of others, that to many he might be a teacher of the ascetic life which he himself had learned from the Scriptures.¹⁴

¹⁰ Urbano 2008. See now Urbano 2013: 207–28 on the *Life of Antony* and the same author’s contribution to this volume.

¹¹ See Gemeinhardt 2012. ¹² Rubenson 1995.

¹³ Although Athanasius might well have integrated other texts into the *Life*, texts which were perhaps written by Serapion of Thmuis, as Martin Tetz argued (Tetz 1982), it is still justified to regard him as the author of the *Life*, a work which is thoroughly permeated by his theological and ecclesiastical agenda during his exile in 356–62 (and not only as the editor or redactor, as is suggested by Barnes 2010: 160–70); see Gemeinhardt 2013: 23ff.

¹⁴ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 46.6: ὁ δὲ Κύριος ἦν αὐτὸν φυλάττων εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν ἐτέρων ὠφέλειαν, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει, ἣν αὐτὸς ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν μεμάθηκεν, πολλοῖς διδάσκαλος γένηται. I use the English translation of the Greek *Life* by Meyer 1950, without indicating minor modifications.

The notion of teacher (*didaskalos*) alludes to Jesus' teaching in the New Testament writings. In the *Life*, it is also applied to the apostle Paul, referring to the criticism of worldly wisdom in 1 Corinthians.¹⁵ Antony had a succession of Biblical teachers, to which one might add the prophet Elijah as a role model for young Antony.¹⁶ Teaching and learning in the *Life* is therefore explicitly linked to Biblical writings, although this does not rule out the possibility that Athanasius intended to allude to other types of teachers that he had in mind – teachers of philosophy – when writing the *Life of Antony*.¹⁷ As Athanasius summarizes, Antony:

...gained renown not for his writings, nor for worldly wisdom, nor for any art, but solely for his love of God.¹⁸

The Greek *Life* thus firmly rejects any “external wisdom” and any secular “art” as helpful for leading a pious life.¹⁹ Instead, the matter of teaching and learning is the Bible, and the *Life* is full of Scriptural quotations and allusions to the Scriptures. This does not come as a surprise, as James Ernest succinctly remarked, “Athanasius’ real mother tongue was not ‘Greek’ but ‘Biblical.’”²⁰

When keeping this in mind, the narration of Antony's childhood becomes understandable in terms of educational goals and values. With respect to Antony's formal learning, Athanasius reports:

Because his parents were Christians, he himself was brought up a Christian ... when he grew to be a boy and was advancing in age, he did not take to schooling, desiring to shun even the companionship of other children: his one desire was, as it is written, to lead a simple life at home.²¹

This is, of course, the very passage which has led to the perception of Antony as an illiterate peasant. But it is important to ask *what kind of*

¹⁵ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 80.1, referring to 1 Cor. 2:4. ¹⁶ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 7.12–13.

¹⁷ For a view of Antony against the background of contemporary models of teachers, see Rubenson 2013b. I do not consider this a strict alternative, but as far as I see, the Biblical allusions deserve equal attention.

¹⁸ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 93.4: Οὐ γὰρ ἐκ συγγραμμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ τῆς ἔξωθεν σοφίας οὐδὲ διὰ τινὰ τέχνην, διὰ δὲ μόνην θεοσεβείαν ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἐγνωρίσθη.

¹⁹ ἢ ἔξωθεν σοφία and τέχνη. *Vit. Ant.* 93.4. ²⁰ Ernest 2011: 282.

²¹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 1.1–3: Χριστιανῶν δὲ αὐτῶν ὄντων χριστιανικῶς ἀνήγετο καὶ αὐτός ... Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ αὐξήσας ἐγένετο παῖς καὶ προέκοπτε τῇ ἡλικίᾳ, **γράμματα** μὲν μαθεῖν οὐκ ἠνέσχετο, βουλόμενος ἐκτός εἶναι καὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς παῖδας συνηθείας. Τὴν δὲ ἐπιθυμίαν πᾶσαν εἶχε, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, ὡς **ἄπλαστος** οἰκεῖν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. ‘Companionship’ (συνήθεια) might also bear a homoerotic connotation (as known from, e.g., Xenophon's writings).

schooling he refused. Not only Antony's own letters but even the Greek *Life* (and several other passages in early monastic literature) testify to his ability to read and write letters.²² As the son of well-to-do parents, it was only to be expected that these abilities would be acquired at home. What Antony refused was not reading and writing in itself but the more elaborate level of education, that is, grammatical and rhetorical training. The *Life* mentions four times that Antony "had not learned the letters,"²³ and once ridicules the Greeks who "go abroad and cross the sea" for exactly this purpose.²⁴ In all these instances letters, *grammata*, indicate exegetical and oratorical skills acquired by studying the Greek classics and enabling the young man to perform appropriately as a rhetor. This is the kind of education which Antony refuses: with such an education, he would cease to be "unformed," *aplastos*, that is, deliberately not erudite, like Jacob (Gen. 25:27 LXX).

It should, however, be stressed that Antony did attend school – namely, the school of the Lord, the Church. Notwithstanding the famous claim that he was "taught by God," *theodidaktos*,²⁵ Antony learned the Scriptures through the lectures,²⁶ delivered during the service, and from other zealous men he learned, among other things, the art of studying the Bible.²⁷ Once he had left his home town, however, Antony never again entered a church building, and although Athanasius does not mention Biblical texts in Antony's hands, the latter's ascetic practice is based upon a thorough knowledge and continuous memorization, *meletê*, of the Bible.²⁸ His way is thus representative of a genuinely Christian, Biblically grounded education.

While this concept of an edifying lecture from the Scriptures instead of a distracting preoccupation with pagan educational texts is meant to establish ascetic ideals within Christianity, it clearly has an apologetic aim also. In chapters 72 to 80, Antony is visited three times by "Greek philosophers," who are finally unmasked as "so-called philosophers,"²⁹ since they rely on "sophistical wranglings over words"³⁰ rather than on

²² Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 81.5; 86.2. See also e.g., Cassian, *Conl.* 8.18 and *Soz. Hist. eccl.* 1.13.5–6.

²³ γράμματα μὴ μαθὼν. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 72.1; similarly 1.2; 73.1; 78.1.

²⁴ ἵνα γράμματα μάθωσιν. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 20.4.

²⁵ θεοδιδάκτος. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 66.2; see 1 Thess. 4:9; John 6:45, quoting Isa. 54:13 LXX. See also Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 93.4.

²⁶ ἀναγνώσεις. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 1.3; 3.7; see 1 Thess. 4:13.

²⁷ φιλολογεῖν. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 4.1; see Sheridan 2002: 11, n. 30 and Bartelink 1994: 141, n. 1.

²⁸ Μελετᾶν of Biblical sayings is mentioned in Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 19.2; 55.4. The notion of a "school" is analyzed and convincingly applied to monastic processes of learning in Rubenson's contribution to the present volume.

²⁹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 72.2–3; 80.5. ³⁰ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 78.2: σοφιστικάι λογομαχίαι.

the ‘power of the faith.’”³¹ In the second discussion with the philosophers, Antony asks them:

Well, what do you say, which is first, the mind or letters? And which is the cause of which – the mind of letters, or letters of the mind? When they stated that the mind is first and is the inventor of letters, Antony said, “Therefore, one who has a sound mind has no need of letters.”³²

Again, letters, *grammata*, is to be understood as advanced formal training at school as opposed to mind, *nous*, which was given to humankind by the Creator. It would seem that the mind does not need any formation through human action but should be kept in its original state in order to meditate: that is, to learn the Christian faith in a spiritual manner. Everything which the philosophers boast of – demonstrative proofs, Greek wisdom, syllogisms and sophisms, eloquence³³ – turns out to be in vain, since fundamentally, faith precedes proof:

- (1a) Faith comes from the disposition of the soul,³⁴
- (1b) while dialectic comes from the skill of those who devise it.³⁵
- (2a) Accordingly, those who have an active faith,³⁶
- (2b) have no need of verbal argument,³⁷ and probably find such activity even superfluous.³⁸

These carefully construed antitheses of course contradict Athanasius’ claim that Antony despised the methods of worldly dialectics (and also shed some light on Athanasius’ own literary skills).³⁹ The point he wishes to make, however, is clear: given their mistaken trust in Classical *paideia*, the philosophers have not yet gained an appropriate understanding of the Biblical writings.⁴⁰ Again, it is Scriptural and spiritual, not grammatical and rhetorical, training in which Antony excels,⁴¹ and which provides the exegetical skills the ascetic self needs as well as do the monastic

³¹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 77.6: ἡ διὰ πίστεως ἐνέργεια.

³² Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 73.2–3: Ὑμεῖς δὲ τί λέγετε; Τί πρῶτόν ἐστιν, νοῦς ἢ γράμματα; Καὶ τί τίνος αἴτιον, ὁ νοῦς τῶν γραμμάτων, ἢ τὰ γράμματα τοῦ νοῦ; 3. Τῶν δὲ εἰπόντων πρῶτον εἶναι τὸν νοῦν καὶ τῶν γραμμάτων εὐρετήν, ἔφη ὁ Ἀντώνιος· Ὡς τοίνυν ὁ νοῦς ὑγιαίνει, τοῦτῳ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα τὰ γράμματα.

³³ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 77.2: ἀποδεικτικοὶ λόγοι; 78.1: ἡ σοφία λόγων Ἑλληνικῶν; 78.3: συλλογιζόμενοι καὶ σοφίζόμενοι; 78.4: καλλιτέπεια.

³⁴ ἀπὸ διαθέσεως ψυχῆς. ³⁵ ἀπὸ τέχνης τῶν συντιθέντων. ³⁶ ἡ διὰ πίστεως ἐνέργεια.

³⁷ ἡ διὰ λόγων ἀπόδειξις. ³⁸ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 77.4–5.

³⁹ A thorough analysis of the education Athanasius himself acquired is highly desirable; but see Stead 1976 and Gemeinhardt 2011.

⁴⁰ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 75.4: μὴ γνησίως ἐντετυχηκέναι ταῖς γραφαῖς ἡμῶν.

⁴¹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 72.1: καὶ φρόνιμος δὲ ἦν λίαν.

communities. Accordingly, Antony begins his lengthy “Address to the monks” (chs. 16–43) with the statement that “the Scriptures are sufficient for our instruction (*didaskalia*) yet it is well for us to encourage each other in the faith (*pistis*) and to stimulate ourselves by words (*logoi*).”⁴² Antony, the spiritual father and teacher of many monks and monasteries,⁴³ presents himself as “unlettered” only in secular terms, while in fact he appears as the protagonist of an educational movement of a distinct Christian, or more precisely, Biblical kind.⁴⁴

The next two parts of the present paper will be devoted to the questions of how this model of an ascetic education was translated into Latin and how it was possibly adapted in order to meet the needs of ascetic communities beyond Egypt.⁴⁵

Educational Terminology in the Anonymous Latin *Life of Antony*

The anonymous translation of the *Life of Antony* which André Wilmart discovered in 1914 was characterized by its first editor, Gérard Garitte, as “littérale jusqu’au barbarisme.”⁴⁶ Seemingly, the translator lacked the boldness or talent, or both simultaneously, to provide a free translation

⁴² Athan. Vit. Ant. 16.1: τὰς μὲν γραφὰς ἱκανὰς εἶναι πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, ἡμᾶς δὲ καλὸν παρακαλεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐν τῇ πίστει, καὶ ἀλείφειν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις.

⁴³ Athan. Vit. Ant. 15.3.

⁴⁴ Again, this is also true for the communities in which the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* were collected and transmitted but also probably used as school texts. Of course, education in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is another unresolved question on which some considerable progress has been made: see, e.g., McVey 1998; Larsen 2006b and 2013a. It is telling how the Church historian Socrates described Antony’s relationship to the Alexandrian polymath and representative of a Biblically grounded education, Didymus the Blind: see the contributions of Westergren and Stefaniw to the present volume.

⁴⁵ This is to say that I do not take it for granted that Athanasius wrote primarily or exclusively for monks in the Western part of the Empire. Even if the address πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τῇ ξένῃ μοναχοῦς (according to some premetaphrastic manuscripts) is authentic (which is corroborated by the Evagrian title *ad peregrinos fratres*, see Bartelink 1994: 124–5, n. 1), “foreign countries” might well be a metaphor used by a bishop dwelling in exile. Since we cannot locate the anonymous translation and since there is no trace of a reception of the Greek *Life* in the West apart from Evagrius’ rendering, it seems equally probable that Athanasius was also, perhaps even primarily, writing to Greek-speaking ascetics who might be found in Alexandria and Egypt where there was urgent need to resist Arians and Melitians (Athan. Vit. Ant. 68.1–3; 89.4). The mention of the messenger waiting for the *Life* in order to take it to the addressees by ship (Vit. Ant. prol. 5) – a classical topos of epistolography – would also be meaningful if the “foreign country” was Palestine or Asia Minor.

⁴⁶ Garitte 1939a. There have been two further editions: Hoppenbrouwers 1960 and Bartelink 1974a, of which the latter will be quoted in this paper.

or create neologisms like Evagrius of Antioch and Jerome.⁴⁷ Anticipating such criticism of his translation, he himself writes in an epilogue to his work:

And so we beg those sensible people who wish to read this piece of writing to look benevolently if we have been unable to convey the force of the Greek text when translating it into Latin; if this is the case, then it is contrary to our intention. We were unwilling to do this translation not because we bore any ill will but because we were well aware that the Greek text, when translated into Latin, might lose its power. Yet we thought it preferable for the Greek text to be subjected to this rather than that those who would read the Greek text in some other, maybe inappropriate, form of translation should be cheated of a profit that could make them divine.⁴⁸

Generally speaking, scholarship on this text has confirmed the translator's self-assessment: The Latin rendering stays close to the Greek original (and is thus an important contemporary source for Athanasius' Greek text).⁴⁹ It resembles a first draft rather than a polished work. But closeness to the original is not caused by the translator's inability only: there was simply no Latin vocabulary of asceticism yet.⁵⁰ Like Tertullian, who at the beginning of the third century had to identify or even create a Latin terminology for, e.g., Trinitarian distinctions, the anonymous translator had to struggle with terms like *monachos*, or *askêsis*, which bore multiple meanings in Greek and did not yet have a clear-cut equivalent in Latin. As a result, *monachus* is first (at least first to be securely dated) attested in the Anonymous' Latin *Life*, signifying (in accordance with the Greek

⁴⁷ Garitte 1956: 6: "son auteur manquait de hardiesse, ou de talent, ou des deux à la fois, pour user de la liberté que Jérôme et Évagre réclamaient pour les traducteurs."

⁴⁸ *Vit. Ant. anon. epil. 1–2*: *Tamen prudentes qui legere uoluerint hanc scripturam [oramus] ut dent ueniam, si gr[a]ecis sermonibus uim exprimere non potuimus transferentes eam in latinam linguam, licet contra nostrum propositum hoc fecerimus, non quasi inuidentes facere, sed scientes quantas infirmitates sustinuit graecus sermo translatus in latinitatem. Maluimus tamen hoc sustinere quam fraudem pati eos lucri deifici qui quomodocumque interpretatum sermonem legere possunt.* This translation is taken from White 1988, 3–70, 69; the following translations of the anonymous version are mine.

⁴⁹ Garitte 1956: 6; Bartelink 1994: 96–7. Although the only extant manuscript stems from the ninth century, it is most probable that the anonymous version precedes Evagrius' translations for at least two reasons: Evagrius refers to a word-for-word translation of the *Life of Antony* into Latin of which there is no other copy in the fourth century; and it is hard to imagine that someone would have endeavored to present a translation of this type after Evagrius' version had gained prominence throughout the West. Finally, the analysis of the vocabulary hints strongly at an origin in the fourth century (Garitte 1939a: 4–7).

⁵⁰ Lorié 1955: 3.

monachos) “a monk living in solitude.”⁵¹ But regarding the Greek *monastêrion*, the Anonymous did not dare to simply transliterate the word to *monasterium* (as Evagrius did for the first time) but called in the help of paraphrases like *mansiones monachorum* or *locus monachorum*.⁵² Thus the Anonymous’ translation witnesses to an early stage of the development of monastic terminology in the Latin West.

Concerning educational terminology, the wording of the Greek is mostly preserved, but some connotations have been lost. That Antony “did not want to learn letters” is rendered as *litteras noluit discere*, and *litterae* in Latin would evoke the same associations as *grammata* in Greek.⁵³ Of course, “learning letters” might refer to elementary instruction,⁵⁴ but with respect to Antony’s correspondence with the emperors, it would evoke the notion of “higher education.”⁵⁵ The epilogue quoted above indicates that the translator expected and feared educated readers, thus testifying to the rising interest in ascetic matters in the West in the middle of the fourth century. Providing a word-for-word translation might at first glance appear to be a safe way to avoid criticism, but it caused a loss of precision. For example, rendering *filologeîn* as *legere* is not really wrong,⁵⁶ but in doing so, the translator stripped the Greek notion from the Christian meaning of ‘reading *the Bible*’ which is essential to Antony’s spiritual formation, as mentioned above. Interestingly, the son of Christian parents was not only “brought up as a Christian”⁵⁷ but was also “educated in living a Christian life” (*secundum christianismum educabant eum*).⁵⁸ Perhaps because the rendering of the Biblical *aplastos* as *sine fictione* made the reference vague,⁵⁹ the translator added that “this was written *about Jacob*,” while Athanasius had not considered it necessary to name the Biblical model. Another explanation is added in connection with the Greeks sailing all around the Mediterranean in order to acquire *grammata*

⁵¹ See Lorié 1955: 27–8; Berschin 1986: 123–4. The Greek μοναχός is not attested before the early fourth century when it refers to ascetics living in small villages: see Bumazhnov 2010: 21–6.

⁵² *Vit. Ant. anon.* 3.2; 14.7; 44.2, 4 (*mansiones monachorum*); 54.6 (*locus monachorum*); see Lorié 1955: 43–6. The single appearance of *cella* in 41.1 does not imply the notion of κελλῖον as in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* but, in the anonymous translation, simply means “cottage” (Lorié 1955: 46).

⁵³ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 1.2; 72.1; 73.1; 78.1.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Lact. *Inst. div.* 3.25.9: “discendae istae communes litterae propter usum legendi”; see also Quint. *Inst.* 1.4.1; Just. *Dig.* 50.5.2.8, and Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4.2.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., *liberales litterae* within an edict of Emperor Constantine in 334 (*Cod. Theod.* 13.4.1), or Possidius referring to Augustine’s education (*Vit. Aug.* 1.1): “saecularibus litteris eruditus adprime, omnibus uidelicet disciplinis inbutus, quas liberales uocant.” Jerome, *Adv. Ruf.* 1.30, claims that Rufinus – himself a prolific writer and translator! – had failed to learn letters (*litteras discere*).

⁵⁶ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 4.1. ⁵⁷ *Vit. Ant.* 1.1: χριστιανικῶς ἀνήγετο. ⁵⁸ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 1.1.

⁵⁹ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 1.3. The Vulgate has *uir simplex*, following the Masoretic Text.

(again in the sense of higher grammatical education). Here the translator writes, “the Greeks whom we call pagans.”⁶⁰ For Athanasius being Greek did not refer to a cultural or ethnic group, but rather, to a religious one;⁶¹ this was not a given for Latin *Graeci*, which had to be explained by the term *paganus* (though this Latin notion bore a variety of meanings, too).⁶² Similarly, “Greek wisdom” is translated as *sapientia paganorum*.⁶³ Accordingly, Antony, who had spent twenty years in concealment and solitude, is “educated in (or by) mysteries,” *educatus sacramentis*, and “filled with godliness by the divinity,” *diuinitate diuinitus plenus*.⁶⁴ The hermit has undergone an initiation or spiritual education by God himself, without any human teacher.

Finally, a telling feature of the Anonymous’ translation is the rendering of *askêsis*.⁶⁵ Since there had been no previous Latin equivalent, the translator used *studium* with adjuncts or amplifications. Antony, prevented from martyrdom, becomes a *magister* of the *studium deificum quod ipse de Scripturis didicit*.⁶⁶ The expression *deificum* is interesting since the notion of divinization (θεοποίησις) does not appear in the Greek *Life*, in spite of the fact that Athanasius is renowned for his soteriological model of “theosis” (or more precisely *theopoiêsis*) as found in his apologetical and anti-Arian writings.⁶⁷ The Anonymous, however, translates *askêsis* no less than nineteen times as *studium deificum* and twenty-two more times with terms including *studium*, e.g., *studium religionis* (3.5), *studium christianismi* (3.3, 16.7) or even *studium christianissimum* (3.3, *uaria lectio*). According to the prologue, the preoccupation of the ascetic is *studere in cultura Dei* (prol. 2).⁶⁸ Again, the notion of *studium* has several meanings:

⁶⁰ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 20.3: *Graeci quos diximus paganos*.

⁶¹ See Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 20.4 (“Ἕλληνες”); 78.1 (λόγοι Ἑλληνικοί); 78.3 (ἑλληνισμός as opposed to the faith of the Christians).

⁶² See Chuvin 2002: 8–9 hinting at Athanasius’ contemporary Marius Victorinus who exemplifies a double meaning of the translation of “Ἕλλην as *paganus*: the ethnic belonging to the Greeks in contrast to the Jews (Marius Vict. *Comm. Gal.* 2.3; 4.3), but also a religious qualification (Marius Vict. *De hom. rec.* 1): “*Graeci, quos Ἕλληνας, uel paganos uocant, multos deos dicunt*.” The same sense of the word is found later in Augustine (*Retract.* 2.69.1): “*deorum falsorum multorumque cultores, quos usitato nomine paganos uocamus*.” See also Gemeinhardt 2009: 457, n. 14.

⁶³ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 80.1.

⁶⁴ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 14.2, rendering the Greek μεμυσταγωγημένος καὶ θεοφορούμενος of *Vit. Ant.* 14.2.

⁶⁵ See Lorié 1955: 69–74.

⁶⁶ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 46.6; the Greek text reads: ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει, ἣν αὐτὸς ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν μεμάθηκεν, πολλοῖς διδάσκαλος γένηται.

⁶⁷ See Frost 2011: 331–2.

⁶⁸ Lorié 1955: 69; on p. 74, he points to Tertullian who had equated *deificum* with *diuinum faciens* (*Apol.* 11.10, here with a critical position against pagan gods who are divinized human beings).

while it indicates someone is striving for something,⁶⁹ it also alludes to expressions like *studia litterarum*.⁷⁰ By employing this notion for rendering *askêsis*, the Anonymous combines the intellectual and the spiritual element: asceticism certainly involves teaching and learning, but in a spiritual manner, and only such a *studium religionis* or, in one single case, the *religio deifica* made Antony known as a saint.⁷¹ While the words *deificus* and *deifica* are thus frequently used by the Anonymous, *studium deificum* merits special interest: in using this expression, the translator finds a surprisingly apt description of the scope of Athanasius' concept of asceticism as a life which brings the self nearer to God. And this concept is, as quoted above from *Vit. Ant.* 93, explicitly opposed to (among others) *sapientia litterarum* which is translated – or rather, interpreted – as *hê exôthen sophia*.⁷²

To sum up: while the previous assessments of the limited originality and linguistic quality of the Anonymous' translation are generally correct, it can be observed that the translator cautiously explored the limits of theological language. He did not slavishly translate word-for-word in every case but also displayed interpretive creativity.⁷³

Cultural Translation in Evagrius' Rendering of the *Life of Antony*

Long before modern research on the Anonymous' *Life*, critical voices came to the fore. Ca. 372, Evagrius of Antioch wrote to his friend Innocentius:

⁶⁹ Lorié 1955: 69: "a fancy or liking for something, an intellectual interest, steady application."

⁷⁰ See, e.g., *Ann. Flor. Verg. or.* 3.5 and *Paneg. Lat.* 9[4].8.1–2 (*studia litterarum*); *Apul. Herb.* 18; *Just. Dig.* 50.13.1.1 and *Cod. Iust.* 10.53.6 (*studia liberalia*); *Aug. Conf.* 3.3.6 (*studia honesta*).

⁷¹ *Vit. Ant. anon.* 93.4: *propter deificam religionem* translates διὰ δὲ μόνην θεοσέβειαν; see Lorié 1955: 72.

⁷² ἡ ἔξωθεν σοφία.

⁷³ This has already been pointed out (in response to Garitte's harsh judgement quoted above) by Mohrmann 1956: 37: "Je crois pouvoir constater une fidélité scrupuleuse à la pensée du texte original, mais c'est précisément cette fidélité qui rend parfois impossible le mot à mot de la traduction. Le fait que le traducteur emploie un latin très idiomatique ajoute à cette difficulté." She hints, e.g., at the translation of μακάριος with *sanctus* in *Vit. Ant. anon.* prol. 2 (while Evagrius writes *beatus*), indicating an emerging idiomatic usage in Latin (1956: 37). It can be disputed, however, whether there was such a Christian "Sondersprache" (or, as Mohrmann puts it herself, "la langue courante des chrétiens," 1956: 41) in the third and fourth centuries: see the critique of Schöllgen 1989: 33. The attitude of Mohrmann and her school (e.g., Hoppenbrouwers) was rejected as early as 1985 by Force 1985: 270: "Mais il est certain que nous nous trouvons ici en présence d'un écrivain qui torture la langue latine pour demeurer fidèle à la lettre du texte grec, et, s'il est au courant des termes chrétiens couramment employés, il révèle un niveau culturel assez bas."

A literal translation made from one language to another conceals the meaning, as rampant grasses suffocate the crops. As long as the text keeps to the cases and turns of phrases, it is forced to move in an indirect way by way of lengthy circumlocutions, and it finds it hard to give a clear account of something which could be expressed succinctly. I have tried to avoid this in translating, as you requested, the [*Life of the*] blessed Antony, [and I have translated] in such a way that nothing should be lacking from the sense although something may be missing from the words. Some people try to capture the syllables and letters, but you must seek the meaning.⁷⁴

That Evagrius referred to the Anonymous' version in this comment is widely acknowledged, though not incontestably.⁷⁵ It is, however, probable that for the first time we observe in Evagrius' preface the practice of advertising one's own work by criticizing others, which is typical for Latin hagiography in Late Antiquity, as for example in Jerome's slightly later *Life of Paul the first Hermit*. In any case, Evagrius published the second translation of the Greek *Life of Antony* into Latin not later than early 374, when his addressee Innocentius died. Being a Greek-speaking native of Antioch, Evagrius had also received a thorough Latin schooling and had spent a decade in the West with Eusebius of Vercelli. His rhetorical capability is displayed in the prologue: the warning that literal translations "as rampant grasses suffocate the crops" reveals the author's debt to Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*,⁷⁶ and even Cicero had mocked lawyers for "snatching at syllables."⁷⁷ Thus, Evagrius' *Life of Antony* was meant to be a piece of literature.⁷⁸ This is expressed not only by its elaborate style in general but also by allusions to and (unmarked) quotations from Classical school authors such as Vergil and Sallustius.⁷⁹ There

⁷⁴ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* prol.: *Ex alia in aliam linguam ad uerbum expressa translatio, sensus operit et ueluti laeto gramine sata strangulat. Dum enim casibus et figuris seruit oratio, quod breui poterat indicare sermone, longo ambitu circumacta uix explicat. Hoc igitur ego uitans ita beatum Antonium te petente transposui, ut nihil desit ex sensu, cum aliquid desit ex uerbis. Alii syllabas aucupentur et litteras, tu quaere sententiam.* The text is taken from the edition of Bertrand 2005; here and in the following, the translation stems from White 1988, without indicating minor modifications (especially where necessitated by the critical edition). Bertrand's doctoral thesis is the only in-depth study to date; unfortunately, it has been published online only (<https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/7821>, last accessed on 5 May, 2014). A brief and instructive comparison of Evagrius' translation with the anonymous one is provided by Berschin 1986: 126–8.

⁷⁵ Positive: Lorie 1955: 2–3; Voss 1967: 94; Bartelink 1980: 63; sceptical: Bertrand 2005: 28.

⁷⁶ Quint. *Inst.* 8 prol. 23.

⁷⁷ Cic. *De Oratore* 2.256; *Pro Caecina* 52: *syllabas aucupari*. A lawyer without rhetorical education is an *auiceps syllabarum* (*De Oratore* 1.236). See Bartelink 1980: 63.

⁷⁸ Voss 1967: 99. ⁷⁹ Quotations and allusions are listed in Bertrand 2005: 287–8.

are, for example, phrases like the Vergilian *nec mora*⁸⁰ or the Sallustian *igitur* at the beginning of a paragraph.⁸¹ And there are moreover half-sentences taken from Vergil⁸² and Sallustius and perhaps even Tacitus,⁸³ which not only add a Classical flavor to the text but situate its author within the historiographical tradition. Similar techniques can be observed in Jerome's *Life of Paul*, written only a few years later and obviously influenced by Evagrius' translation.⁸⁴

In Evagrius, "translating *paideia*" thus includes employing bits of Classical literature in order to shape the Latin translation according to the expectations of an erudite readership – which was not the audience Athanasius had in mind. To translate *sensum ad sensum* instead of *uerbum e uerbo*, was later appreciated by Jerome as the appropriate method for translations in general, with reference to Evagrius' *Life of Antony* in particular.⁸⁵ Since the preface to the Latin version of Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker* (written in Greek in ca. 380 and translated by Rufinus two decades later) also echoes Evagrius' claim precisely,⁸⁶ a certain consensus apparently emerged as to how to translate hagiographical texts as soon as such writings spread from East to West across the Mediterranean. At the same time, the vocabulary of asceticism gained its characteristic shape in Greek and Latin, including words such as *monachus* or *monasterium*, the former first attested in the Anonymous' translation, the latter for the first time in Evagrius. But Evagrius did not translate slavishly: sometimes, *monastêrion* is replaced by paraphrases or other terms.⁸⁷ Evagrius has thus been compared to Symeon the Metaphrastes due to his stylistic and compositional effort on Athanasius' text: he tried, as Bernd Reiner Voss puts it, to turn an edifying text into literature.⁸⁸

Evagrius' quest for the *sensus* can be observed on three levels: the rendering of phrases, the modification of (parts of) the narrative plot,

⁸⁰ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 14.7; 54.5; 82.9, see Verg. *Aen.* 5.368; Voss 1967: 96.

⁸¹ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 1.1; 8.1; see Voss 1967: 100.

⁸² See, e.g., Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 8.4 (*alta quiete prostratis*, see Verg. *Aen.* 6.522); 14.2 (*faciei eius pallor obsederat*, see *Aen.* 4.499); 30.1 (*credite, experto*, see *Aen.* 11.283); 53.2 (*uidit bestiam pubetenus humanam faciem praeferentem*, see *Aen.* 3.426–7) and 82.9 (*horret animus replicare quae gesta sunt*, see *Aen.* 2.12).

⁸³ The respective texts are discussed in Voss 1967: 99–101.

⁸⁴ See Gemeinhardt 2007: 259–60.

⁸⁵ Jerome, *Ep.* 57.6.1–2 (without naming Evagrius); id., *De uiris ill.* 125.

⁸⁶ See Rapp 2004: 1270–1.

⁸⁷ E.g. Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 54.6: *ad monachos qui inuitauerant peruenit* for *ὡς δὲ ἤλθεν εἰς τὰ ἔξω μοναστήρια*. Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 91.1: *habitaculum*. See Lorié 1955: 46.

⁸⁸ Voss 1967: 99: "Nicht nur in der Stilisierung, auch in der Komposition also ist Evagrius anspruchsvoller als Athanasios. Dessen Bestreben ging auf Erbauung, Evagrius hat versucht, aus dem erbauichen Text Literatur werden zu lassen."

and the concept of ascetic education. When debating with pagan philosophers and “sages of this world,”⁸⁹ Evagrius renders Antony’s dialectical argument quoted above as follows:

What comes first: sense or letters? And which is the cause of which? . . .
So [he said] if anyone’s sense is sound, he has no need of letters.⁹⁰

While the Anonymous had translated *nous* as *mens*, Evagrius chose *sensum*, thus establishing his hermeneutical principles in the hermit’s argument: one should neither philosophically nor linguistically stick to the letter but instead, explore the meaning of the content. While he did not remove the claim that spiritual experience comes from a sound mind rather than from externally acquired knowledge, he may have indicated that this referred to the necessity of using one’s intellect to grasp Antony’s ascetic vision. Thus the preface to and translation of the Greek *Life* are neatly interwoven, both intended to appeal to educated readers.⁹¹

There is, however, an interesting observation concerning the translation of *nous* (“mind”) in Athanasius by Evagrius. The latter seems to miss an important point: namely, that *nous* and its equivalent, “the intellectual power of the soul,”⁹² must remain pure in order to maintain a spiritual bond with God, and this is what Antony ponders when he is tempted by the Devil.⁹³ In this way, human beings might realize their *raison d’être*:⁹⁴ to enter into communion with God – “with the divine and intellectual nature” – and finally to become deified.⁹⁵ This concept is absent in Evagrius: he renders the phrase above as *participes naturae caelestis* and does not employ the intellectual and spiritual capacity of the soul as the primordial connection between God and human beings. Instead, Antony ponders the *conditio humana* and preserves the *illaesa animae puritas* when tempted by the Devil.⁹⁶ He then views the “natural

⁸⁹ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 72.2: *philosophi gentiles*; 73.1: *mundi sapientes*.

⁹⁰ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 73.2–3: *Respondete mihi, quid prius, sensus an litterae? et quid cujus exordium? . . . Igitur si cui sensus incolumis est, hic litteras non requirit*. White renders *sensus* as “mind” (according to the Greek νοῦς) and thus misses the point that I consider important for Evagrius’ argument.

⁹¹ The Latin translation of the *Letters of St. Antony* uses *sensum* frequently. If, as has recently been claimed, this translation does not stem from the fifteenth but from the sixth or even fifth century (see Tóth 2013), it would be necessary to wonder about a possible influence of Evagrius’ *Life* on the translated *Letters*.

⁹² τὸ νοερὸν τῆς ψυχῆς. ⁹³ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 5.5; 45.2: λογιζόμενος τὸ νοερὸν τῆς ψυχῆς.

⁹⁴ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 20.7: Τὸ γὰρ εὐθεῖαν εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ κατὰ φύσιν νοερὸν αὐτῆς ὡς ἐκτίσθη.

⁹⁵ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 74.4: κοινωνῆσαι θείας καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως. ⁹⁶ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 45.2 and 5.5.

purity of the soul, if not polluted by any dirt from outside,” as “source and origin of the virtues.”⁹⁷ These passages introduce the topic of purity which is, of course, of paramount importance for any conceptualization of the ascetic life. But Evagrius has a moral, not a soteriological perspective. Nowhere does he speak of a *studium deificum*, which had been identified as the result of the translational practice of the Anonymous. Though the notion of *studium* is frequently found in Evagrius’ translation, it refers mainly to the labors of the ascetic life, not to any kind of deification.⁹⁸ The translator’s liberty has, perhaps unconsciously, modified the theological discourse found in Athanasius’ *Life of Antony*.

An interesting case in point in Evagrius’ translation is Antony’s refusal to attend school. While Athanasius and the Anonymous had explained that this was due to the boy’s disinclination to follow the “customs” of children,⁹⁹ Evagrius points out that “he did not want to learn his letters so as not to have to suffer from confrontations with the silly fables of the children.”¹⁰⁰ While the first two versions depict the boy Antony as the “hermit-to-be,” *anachôrêtês*, and thus provide what Thomas Hägg has termed “a typical instance of the proleptic childhood description,”¹⁰¹ Evagrius refers to the long-standing Christian criticism of the pagan school texts and their mythological content. He thus places Antony’s behavior within the discourse about legitimacy and the necessity of the reception of pagan education in Christian hagiography, which would become a standard feature of prefaces of the Latin *Lives* of saints. And there were reasons for doing so. Emperor Julian (d. 363) had been attempting to restore the pagan cults and to provide an ideological superstructure drawn from the ancient myths, while at the same time he had tried to expel Christian teachers from the schools if they were not willing to teach the myths found in Homer and others as the basis of the true religion.¹⁰² Although this attempt was by no means successful, Julian’s religious agenda managed to provoke sharp apologetics for

⁹⁷ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 20.7: *Cui enim dubium est, quin naturalis animae puritas, si nulla fuerit extrinsecus sorde polluta, fons sit et origo uirtutum?*

⁹⁸ This is also true for the *studium beatae uitae* (Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 45.1).

⁹⁹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 1.2: βουλόμενος ἐκτὸς εἶναι καὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς παῖδας συνηθείας; *Vit. Ant. anon.* 1.2: “*uolens liber esse a consuetudine puerorum*” – according to Mohrmann 1956: 39, “une traduction excellente.”

¹⁰⁰ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 1.2: *et cum iam puer esset non se litteris erudiri, non ineptis infantum iungi passus est fabulis.*

¹⁰¹ Hägg 2011: 20. ¹⁰² This story has been related for example in Gemeinhardt 2007: 351–67.

centuries. I would argue that Evagrius, too, admonished his readers to shun the myths contained in the school texts – a topic which had not yet been relevant to Athanasius when writing the *Life*.¹⁰³

Evagrius was praised for his education by contemporaries such as Jerome and remembered by Sozomenus and Cassiodorus as a highly literate man.¹⁰⁴ Why would such a man, a native Greek from Antioch, which was a center of learning, criticize his fellow Greeks for traveling around and searching for “teachers of vain letters” and underline that such journeys are not necessary for Christians because (here again, the Greek text is significantly modified) “the Kingdom of Heaven is located in every place on earth?”¹⁰⁵ Is this merely another simple example of the “rhetoric of paradox,” as Averil Cameron termed it two decades ago?¹⁰⁶ I would answer affirmatively, but would further specify the kind of paradox Evagrius advocates. The omnipresence of the Kingdom of Heaven (see above) is mirrored by the ongoing spread of the news about Antony: Athanasius in the Greek *Life* enumerates Spain, Gaul, Rome, and Africa; Evagrius adds Italy and the Illyricum to the list in *Vit. Ant.* 93.¹⁰⁷ It might be asked whether this reflected an early success of the Anonymous’ translation in the West. No doubt, Evagrius intended to find readers of his work in Italy, especially in Rome – readers who would appreciate the literary culture of his translation and who would at the same time have the *sensus* to grasp Evagrius’ *scopus*, namely, that the model of the illiterate hermit was not to be imitated literally. At the very end, Evagrius states:

Antony came to fame not through the dazzling discourse of books that have been circulated far and wide nor by means of the arguments of worldly wisdom nor because of his family’s nobility nor through the accumulation of great wealth. To whom [should this be attributed] if not to Christ whose gift it is?¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Whether Athanasius’ *Life of Antony* is a response to Julian’s politics of education, as argued by Rubenson 2013b, is still open to debate. For less apologetic reactions and an alternative view, see Westergren in this volume.

¹⁰⁴ Cassiod. *Hist. trip.* 8.192, following Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 6.30.6.

¹⁰⁵ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 20.4: *Graeci studia transmarina sectentur, et in alieno orbe constitutos, inanium litterarum quaerant magistros. Nobis uero nulla proficiscendi, nulla transfretandi fluctus necessitas imminet, in omni sede terrarum constituta sunt regna coelorum.*

¹⁰⁶ Cameron 1991, 86 *et passim*. ¹⁰⁷ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 93.5.

¹⁰⁸ Evagr. *Vit. Ant.* 93.4: *Hoc etiam, fratres, quod per omnes prouincias amor eius famaue uolitaui, quem nec librorum disseminatorum oratio luculenta, nec mundanae sapientiae disputatio, nec nobilitas generis, nec opum infinita congestio commendauit, cui omnium ore est ascribendum, nisi Christo, cuius hoc donum est?*

Interestingly, noble descent and wealth are Evagrius' additions. Being well read and dialectically trained, descending from noble ancestry and being considerably wealthy: these traits were common for the readers of the Latin *Life of Antony* (as they were for Jerome's monastic novels, for hagiographical writings like the *Life of Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus, and for Rufinus' translation of the *History of the Monks in Egypt* and others). Everything Antony had despised and rejected in favor of the Kingdom of Heaven abounded in this literature and was clear to the readers. Nonetheless, they took asceticism seriously and wanted to learn how to live as ascetics in their cities and villas. Significantly, Evagrius omits the notion of *monachus* when translating Athanasius' preface: "to know who Antony was offers us the perfect path to virtue."¹⁰⁹ Thus he did not only translate a text from Greek to Latin but smoothly transformed the sense of Athanasius' ascetic vision in order to conform to the expectations and possibilities of his readers. This might be termed, following Rapp, not only a translation of a popular text but also a "cultural translation" of a concept of ascetic education.

Conclusions

We do not know which translation Augustine had in mind (or whether he even knew of any Latin version of the *Life of Antony*) when he wrote book eight of the *Confessions*, where the story of Antony functions as the model for Augustine's own conversion. It might, however, be safe to guess that he was acquainted with Evagrius' *Life of Antony*, which would provide the Latin text of the hermit's life for centuries to come (especially because it became part of the *Vitae Patrum* corpus). And from the prologue of *On Christian doctrine* (quoted above), it is clear that Augustine took Antony's lack of literacy literally and thus contributed to the image of the rustic saint as opposed to the cultural values transmitted by Classical education. Augustine's representation of Antony thus witnesses to both levels of translation dealt with in the present paper: the rendering of the Greek text into Latin and the transformation of the image of the early monks for an erudite audience in the West. It is striking how successful the image of the unlettered Antony was, notwithstanding the fact that education is much more present in the *Life* than has long been assumed.

¹⁰⁹ Evagr. Vit. Ant. prol. 3: *Perfecta est siquidem ad uirtutem uia, Antonium scire quis fuerit.*

We do, however, observe that this reception of the story of a desert saint is the product of a succession:

- from oral or written tradition (perhaps already in Coptic) to the Greek *Life* by Athanasius which is itself an elaborate interpretation of the emerging ascetic movement,
- from the Greek *Life* to the Latin translations by the Anonymous and by Evagrius, aimed at communicating ascetic values to a literate audience in the West, and
- from the translations to enthusiastic appraisals of Antony as in Augustine, or to critical receptions such as Jerome's *Life of Paul* and *Life of Hilarion*, which try to replace Athanasius' hero with others.

Within this succession of texts, we can grasp the effect the news from the desert had throughout the Mediterranean. We can also trace the interaction of word-for-word translation and "cultural translation." On the one hand, Athanasius as well as his Latin followers had to find appropriate expressions for the new phenomenon of the hermits, and we see clearly that there was a variety of words for what we now call "monastery," for example. On the other hand, the word *monastêrion* or *monasterium* itself involved a whole set of implications for what it meant to dwell in the desert – and these implications would have been understood differently when read at the margin of the desert, in urbanized Alexandria, or in Rome by people who wanted to become ascetics on their rural estates. This succession of interpretations continued when the notion and organizational shape of a monastery was transformed in the course of the Middle Ages. But even in Late Antiquity, we have to distinguish between these two main levels of translation in order to understand how learned men like Evagrius struggled with the words and concepts which Athanasius employed for describing something completely new in the world of Christian literature.

Only a few decades later, Rufinus of Aquileia, John Cassian, Honoratus of Arles, and many others would set out to visit the sites of the holy men personally and develop their own monastic ideals by way of translating Egyptian asceticism into other contexts, thus becoming mediators of ascetic cultures. In principle, however, it is clear that this corpus of ascetic texts contains many different views on the importance of education for a spiritual life and on the dangers of being (too) literate. The topic of education on this Western branch has not, however, been mapped systematically yet. I am convinced that only by studying this in more detail will we be able to overcome perceptions of a contrast between monastic spirituality

and Classical education. Moreover, I believe that it is this manifold interaction between asceticism and education that may give us a clue to the reception and appropriation of early Egyptian monasticism throughout the Roman Empire (and beyond). Through translating *paideia*, the authors of the stories of rustic hermits came to thoroughly shape the Christian worldview.

3 | *Paideia*, Piety, and Power

Emperors and Monks in Socrates' Church History

ANDREAS WESTERGREN

Introduction

We judge by what we see. But sometimes we do not see what is in front of our eyes. In the year 375 CE, a large group of soldiers headed into the Egyptian desert. Backed up by a bishop – and Emperor Valens – these soldiers had just been part of the persecution of the anti-Arians in Alexandria, but still not content, they targeted the otherworldly monks of Nitria. Arriving in this oasis of peace, the soldiers looked, but did not see:

Coming to the place, they caught sight of the accustomed practices of these men: praying, healing and expelling demons; however, taking little notice of the wonders of God, they did not allow them to complete their accustomed prayers in the places of prayer, but threw them even out of these.¹

It is the Church historian Socrates who opens our eyes to this well-attested account.² Blinded by fury, the soldiers did not discern the wonders of God. Even less did they understand that their actions were part of a divine plan, where the orthodox faith is defended by those who suffer for it. As a result, two other traits of true monastic life can be added to the items listed above: martyrdom and exile.

We judge by what we see. But sometimes we see *only* what is in front of our eyes. If this is the single picture of monasticism that is taken into account, we run the risk of becoming captivated by its vivid imagery. Socrates' portrayal neatly confirms the image of monastic life as separate from secular life. What could monks do apart from praying, healing, and fighting demons? A common opinion about the Church historians of the

¹ Socr. Schol. Hist. eccl. 4.24.5–7: Ὡς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον ἐγίνοντο, κατελάμβανον τοὺς ἀνδρας τὰ συνήθη πράττοντας, εὐχομένους, πάθη θεραπεύοντας, δαίμονας ἐξελαύνοντας. Οἱ δὲ μικρὰ τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ θαυμάτων φροντίσαντες οὐδὲ τὰς συνήθεις εὐχὰς ἐν τοῖς εὐκτηρίοις τόποις συνεχώρουν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ αὐτοὺς καὶ τούτων ἐξέβαλον. My translation here and in the following.

² For a discussion of the many sources pertaining to this event and Emperor Valens' anti-monastic politics, see Lenski 2004: 95–103.

fifth century, exemplified in such examples, seems to be that they “celebrated . . . the rejection of urban life at the heart of monastic life.”³ Because there is some truth to this opinion, it is easy to miss the nuances and be unable to see that there are other, counterbalancing images, even in the same historical work.

Next to this first sketch of spiritual detachment, therefore, we can add another, partly contrasting, depiction. At the end of his seventh and final book, Socrates provides a brief glimpse into the palace halls of Theodosius II:

He organized the palace not very differently from a monastery: so indeed it was he himself, together with his sisters, who rose early and recited antiphonal hymns to the divine. As a result he could proclaim the divine words by heart. Meeting with the bishops, he discoursed about the Scriptures like a priest ordained long ago. And he also collected the sacred books, and all the books of their interpreters, even more than Ptolemy the Philadelphian before him.⁴

Here we are not stranded in the desert any more, but are placed in the pulsating heart of the empire. In this setting, the ascetic emperor practices the “philosophy of deeds” as he prays with his sisters, learns holy books by heart, and even collects books.⁵ In comparison with the previous image of monastic life, the practice of virtue and prayer is not something distinct from literate learning. Arguably, this version of the emperor as a virtuous priest and monk is no less captivating than the previous one.

With these two pictures of monastic life in the desert and the capital, we may ask how they fit together in Socrates’ work. Since we judge by what we see, we must try to pause the images that are flickering past our eyes, and view them together. In the following, I will therefore try to regard these disparate views of monasticism against the larger horizon of Socrates’ history of the Church, and especially his portrayal of learnedness. In a first step, I will identify some of the keywords in Socrates’ discourse about *paideia*. Then I will observe how learning is a crucial part of the picture of another emperor, Julian. And last, the stories about the monks

³ Rohrbacher 2002: 202.

⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.22.4–6: Οὐκ ἀλλοιότερα δὲ ἀσκητηρίου κατέστησε τὰ βασιλεια· αὐτὸς τοιγαροῦν <σύν> ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ ἀδελφαῖς ὀρθρίζων ἀντιφώνους ὕμνους εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἔλεγεν. Διὸ καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα ἀπὸ στήθους ἀπήγγελλεν. Ἐντυχάνουσι γοῦν τοῖς ἐπισκόποις ὡς ἱερεὺς πάλαι καθεστὼς ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν διελέγετο· συνῆγε δὲ καὶ τὰς βίβλους τὰς ἱεράς, καὶ ὅσας οἱ ἑρμηνεῖς αὐτῶν συνέγραψαν, μᾶλλον ἢ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Φιλάделφος πρότερον.

⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.22.8: τὴν δι’ ἔργων . . . φιλοσοφίαν; in contrast to the “syllogisms of Aristotle.”

will be read within this larger narrative. Doing so, I will suggest that the depiction of a new class of “orthodox” Christian teachers, of whom many are in close contact with the monasteries, is at the heart of Socrates’ work. The monastic movement is portrayed as containing both “simple monks” and “intellectuals,” and this juxtaposition is crucial for the way that Socrates presents society in general. Education is not good (or bad) in itself, but it is a prerequisite for ruling the world. More than anything, *paideia* is a matter of imitating the right exemplars in order to be able to govern both Empire and Church in the best possible way, and there are also monastic thinkers among the best teachers.

Places and People of Learning

Before viewing the educational vocabulary in Socrates’ *Church History* in context, we will first glance at his use of terms. Generally, there are only occasional references to places, or institutions, of teaching in either Socrates or his contemporary colleagues Sozomen and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.⁶ This should not come as a surprise, since it only confirms what Raffaella Cribiore has stated with respect to the papyrological material, namely that “[m]ost of the time schools were identified by the teacher who provided the instruction.”⁷ Some of the terms that do occur are simply derived from the most common words for teaching, like *didaskô* and *paideuô*. The rare use of terms like *didaskaleion* and *paideutêrion* does not indicate that these places were insignificant: on the contrary, these words are reserved for exceptional settings. Cribiore observes that Libanius called his teaching site a *didaskaleion* only after he had become officially acknowledged as a rhetor in Antioch.⁸ The one time that Sozomen mentions a *didaskaleion* in his *Church History*, he means the legendary school in Alexandria.⁹ Theodoret relates how a well-educated future bishop, Protogenes, starts a Christian *didaskaleion*, or as is also said, a *paidagôgeion*, in Edessa.¹⁰ Socrates and Sozomen also employ another term for a school, *paideutêrion*, when they recount how Julian, soon to become emperor, studies in the schools of Athens.¹¹ Even if these

⁶ For a list of terms, see Cribiore 1996: 13–26, 17, and 19–20; for the fact that “no evidence supports the notion that the Egyptian gymnasia were academic institutions,” see Cribiore 2001: 21–36, and Morgan 1998: 25–33. Words that do *not* appear for schools in Socrates, Sozomen or Theodoret are, e.g., ἀκροατήριον, ᾠδεῖον, and θέατρον.

⁷ Cribiore 2001: 18. ⁸ Cribiore 2007: 43. ⁹ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.1.

¹⁰ Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.8. ¹¹ Socr. *Schol. Hist. eccl.* 3.1.9, 3.23.20; Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 5.2.19.

individual examples represent almost the only occurrences of these terms, the symbolic value of the cities where these schools were located should not be missed. The only places that could boast of hosting grand institutions were the largest and most well-known cities. Apart from these, we mainly hear about teachers.

There is one more exception to the rule, however. Apart from those already mentioned, there are also terms that have a special philosophical connotation. Even if our focus is on Socrates' text, it is worth mentioning this detail, since most of these terms are rare, or non-existent, in Socrates, while they appear more often in Sozomen and Theodoret.¹² In this regard, Socrates does not seem to be part of the same "competitive atmosphere" that Arthur Urbano describes in his contribution to this volume.¹³ One of the places often referred to by Sozomen is a *phrontistêrion*, the "place for meditation," which could be any school, but more specifically, a school of philosophy.¹⁴ Increasingly this word came to be used to depict a monastic setting, but for both Sozomen and Theodoret such a place was by definition also philosophical.¹⁵ Other words possibly suggesting a philosophical school context are *palaistra*, the "wrestling-school,"¹⁶ *scholê*, which means "leisure" but may indicate both a "learned discussion" and a "school,"¹⁷ and also *diatribê*, which may mean "study", and even "school of philosophy."¹⁸

If we turn from the places of teaching to the people who frequent these stories, it is easy to see how familiar expressions for "following a person as a teacher,"¹⁹ or being a hearer²⁰ of someone, are employed on a number of occasions and with respect to different kinds of teachers (or subjects). Athanasius, it is told, had "followed the grammarians and the rhetors" in Alexandria before he became the bishop of the city.²¹ Hilarion is said to have "followed the grammarian"²² in Alexandria when he first met the

¹² For the use of these terms in Theodoret's *History of the Monks*, see Westergren 2012: 85–92.

¹³ Urbano in this volume.

¹⁴ LSJ, φροντιστήριον. Reference is made both to "Socrates' school" (from Aristotle) and to the community of Indian sages which is idealized in Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*.

¹⁵ See Westergren 2012: 85–92 for Theodoret, and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.2, 6.32.1, 5, and 8.9.4. See also Lampe 1961: 1491, φροντιστήριον, where it can signify both a "place for meditation" and a "monastery."

¹⁶ See LSJ, παλαίστρα. One reference is to Socrates' *palaistra*, which indicates a metaphorical connection between this school and the philosophical school. The word is not found in Lampe.

¹⁷ For these meanings, see LSJ, s.v. II.1 and 2. In Lampe 1961: 1361 "school, party" is one of seven meanings. See also the discussion of the term in the contribution by Rubenson in this volume.

¹⁸ For διατριβή in the sense of "school" (esp. of philosophy), see LSJ s.v. I.2.d.

¹⁹ LSJ, φοιτάω, s.v. I.5, "resort to a person as a teacher . . . abs., go to school."

²⁰ ἀκροατής or μαθητής. ²¹ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 2.17.10: γραμματικοῖς τε καὶ ῥήτορι φοιτήσας.

²² Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.14.22: γραμματικῶ δέε φοιτῶν.

monk Antony, an encounter which changed his life by giving him a philosophical direction.²³ And Aëtius, not yet nicknamed Atheist, “followed the teachers” who knew Aristotle in Alexandria.²⁴ In another part of the Mediterranean world, two young Athenian students, Gregory and Basil “became hearers of the sophists flourishing at that time: Himerius and Proharesius.”²⁵ Subsequently they continued their studies of rhetoric in Antioch, where they “went to the school of Libanius together.”²⁶ John Chrysostom started his career in the same city, where he is described as having been “a pupil of Libanius, the Sophist, and a hearer of Andragathius, the Philosopher.”²⁷ However, instead of practicing law in the end, he became totally determined to lead an ascetic lifestyle, influenced by two of his fellow students, Diodore and Theodore.²⁸

In some of these instances, the erudition of these men is spelled out in more detail. Didymus is an obvious case, being blind, but still remarkably learned. Sozomen gives a vivid image of how Didymus learned the letters of the alphabet with his fingers on wax tablets. Both Socrates and Sozomen mention that he became blind at a young age, while still “learning the first elements of education.”²⁹ With a now familiar phrase, Didymus is said to have “followed the teachers,”³⁰ and both authors agree that Didymus had achieved knowledge of everything,³¹ but their accounts differ as to exactly what. With neat parallelisms, Socrates speaks of grammar and rhetoric, philosophy and dialectic, arithmetic and music, while Sozomen lists poetry and rhetoric, astronomy and geometry, arithmetic and philosophy.³² In both cases they depict a liberal arts education of some kind, an *enkyklios paideia* with humanistic and mathematical sciences.³³ As we can see in Blossom Stefaniw’s analysis of Didymus’ lecture notes, the different topics mirror the practice of a “real” grammarian, whose students had to rehearse “the connection of everything, of all valuable knowledge, with the fundamental texts of their culture.”³⁴ What Socrates does not mention but

²³ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.14.22: καὶ συγγενόμενος αὐτῷ παραπλησίως φιλοσοφεῖν ἔγνω.

²⁴ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.8: φοιτῆσαι τοῖς διδασκάλοις.

²⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.6. See also Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 6.17.1: Ἰμερίῳ καὶ Προαιρεσίῳ τοῖς τότε δοκιμωτάτοις σοφισταῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις ἐφοίτησαν.

²⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.6: Λιβανίῳ συμφοιτήσαντες. See LSJ, συμφοιτάω, “esp. go to school together.”

²⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.1. ²⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.4.

²⁹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.2: τὰ πρῶτα τῶν γραμμάτων στοιχεῖα μαθόν.

³⁰ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.2: τοῖς . . . διδάσκουσι φοιτῶν.

³¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.2, and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.1.

³² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.4–5, and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.1.

³³ For different discussions about the *enkyklios paideia*, see Marrou 1948: 266–79, 409–10; Morgan 1998: 50–89; Gemeinhardt 2007: 46–51.

³⁴ Stefaniw in this volume.

Stefaniw makes clear is that Didymus taught this all-embracing *paideia* with the help of the Christian Scriptures. Probably Socrates left this fact out because he preferred a traditional education for Christians. In any case, the emphasis is not on content, but on talent and accomplishment in Socrates and Sozomen. The common denominator of both accounts is the ease and rapidity with which Didymus learns (even “the most twisted theorems in mathematics,” according to Sozomen),³⁵ and more importantly, the influence Didymus had. He was a “wonderful and learned man,”³⁶ Socrates states, underlining how God used Didymus to preserve the faith against the Arians.³⁷

Not surprisingly, the most general term for a teacher is *didaskalos*. At times it is used as a synonym for different kinds of civic teachers, such as grammarians, rhetors or philosophers.³⁸ At other times the term is employed to signify the “teachers of the Church,” like Paul, or contemporary bishops.³⁹ In this second, theological context, words derived from *didaskein* abound, and the topic at hand is often the Christian *didaskalia*. Does this mean that we have moved away from an educational setting? Before drawing such a conclusion, however, one should note to what extent we are still dealing with literate people. In some of these instances, we hear of Christian leaders authoring books. Acacius, for example, did not compose one but many books, including a biography of his own *didaskalos*, who was also his predecessor as bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea.⁴⁰ In a similar manner, George of Laodicea wrote about *his* Eusebius, the Bishop of Emesa, recounting both his Scriptural and his secular education.⁴¹ And Theophronius, a Eunomian heretic (who, in the style of the heretics, soon splits from his teacher), wrote a rhetorical work influenced by Aristotle, and took part in “unfitting argumentations.”⁴² Like their “secular” counterparts, these Christian teachers also performed in a civic context. Rather than taking Christian teaching as an indication of a separate sphere, we should see these examples as a mark of Christian intellectual presence in the mainstream.

³⁵ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.2: τῶν ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασι σκολιῶν θεωρημάτων.

³⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.1: θαυμαστός καὶ ἐλλόγιμος.

³⁷ πίστις is taken up at both the beginning and the end of the chapter. Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.1 and 11. See Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.3 for Didymus' fame (κλέος) and attraction.

³⁸ See, e.g., the common description of a grammarian and a rhetor as “teachers of Greek literature” in Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.46.2.

³⁹ For Paul, see, e.g., Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.21.5 and 2.30.39. For other teachers of the Church, see 3.16.27, 5.10.11, 13, 15. In 5.10.11 the Armenian version says “bishop” instead of teacher.

⁴⁰ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.4; see also Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.2. ⁴¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.9.

⁴² Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 7.17.2–3: ἀτόπους . . . διαλέξεις.

Together with *didaskalos*, there are more specific words identifying teachers in the Church histories, especially *grammatikoi*, *rhêtores*, *sophistai*, and *philosophoi*.⁴³ If these terms are compared with the traditional scheme of ancient education, beginning with elementary studies, continuing with grammar and rhetoric, and perhaps finishing with philosophy, it is easy to see that teachers on a lower level, like the *grammatodidaskaloi*, are missing.⁴⁴ These texts present higher level education, and high-status professors, commonly styled as learned,⁴⁵ naturally take precedence over their not so high-flown colleagues. The terms for teachers are titles designating status as much as function, and the higher the function, the higher the frequency. In the ecclesiastical histories there are more philosophers than there are rhetors or sophists, and in their turn, more rhetoricians than grammarians (*grammatikos* possibly signifying elementary teachers). So, just as much as these teachers reflect a progression of learning, they also reflect a hierarchy of learned people. In recent evaluations of the tripartite scheme of education, scholars have therefore tended to shift focus from an all-encompassing “organizational structure” to a shared “idea” about *paideia*.⁴⁶ This idea, or ideal, was the common denominator among the literate, *literati*, all over the empire, and it included a notion of progression from the simple to the advanced with the aforementioned teachers as symbols of the transitions. In the same breath as the teachers, the illiterates should be mentioned, since they constituted the other, negative end of the same scheme. Words that are occasionally employed to signal lack of education are *anagôgos*, *agrammatos*, *apaideutos*, and *idiôtês*. Later a few examples will be taken up, but one word of caution should be given already, as these terms are often used to signal (lack of) status rather than specifying actual illiteracy; these are relative terms that may simply point out that a person is not *as* educated as someone else. Therefore Socrates depicts the Arians as “uneducated” in comparison with the Cappadocians.⁴⁷

⁴³ Note also references to *καθηγηταί* (and *ύφηγηταί*) in Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.16 and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 5.2.16. According to Cribiore, these were “private teachers who taught at various levels of education.” Cribiore 1996: 167.

⁴⁴ There are also sporadic references to *παιδαγωγοί*, but they do not clearly refer to “children’s attendants.” See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.14, 15, and Cribiore 1996: 161.

⁴⁵ *ἐλλόγιμοι*. A simple Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) search gives seventeen examples: e.g., Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.11 and 5.21.2 about the Novatian Sisinnius. See also *εὐπαιδευτος*, which is employed as an opposite to the unlearned in Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.27.5.

⁴⁶ For this conclusion, see Gemeinhardt 2007: 34 and Cribiore 2001: 36–44.

⁴⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.10: ἀπαιδευτοί.

Even though the position of “teacher” is revered, teachers are not unanimously praised. When the spotlight rests on them, both good and bad behavior is revealed. In order to characterize distinct classes of teachers, stereotypes matter. Sophists, for example, are thought to be overly concerned with unfruitful details and unable to treasure true philosophy.⁴⁸ Even if the same critical stance can be taken against philosophers, their profile has clearer contours and is not solely formed by old prejudices. First of all, even though they are divided into different schools, philosophers still constitute one class (in contrast to the divided Christian leaders),⁴⁹ a class characterized by its habits and specific dogmas.⁵⁰ There is a strong religious component in this philosophy, and philosophers are occasionally caught out engaging in cultic practices like divination, oracles, and reciting hymns.⁵¹ And yet, the fact that some philosophers are distinguished as “Hellene” leaves room for people of other persuasions.⁵² On a few symbolic occasions, Sozomen speaks of the monks as “ecclesiastical philosophers” (in the plural).⁵³ Nevertheless, even if references to Christian *philosophy* abound, an outright identification of Christian *philosophers* is an exception.⁵⁴ In both Sozomen and Socrates, there is a hesitation that one can almost physically sense when Socrates says that Evagrius previously had been a “philosopher of the word only,” but as a monk he had become “a pupil of the philosophy of action.”⁵⁵ While philosophy is embraced, the philosopher is kept on a leash.

To round off this preliminary exercise, we should remember to what extent a historiographical work is a narrative about people. Even though Sozomen claims there is a divine providence guiding history, it is still a history of good and bad examples, where most examples come from the elite. Not much detail about education is found in these stories (especially not on a lower level), but what is provided is a vivid image of the close relation between *paideia* and power. Teachers, both Christian and non-Christian, are monuments, kept at a distance, still attracting awe and wonder. As part of their road to fame or infamy, the Church historians sometimes saw it fit to mention their education, since it was one important

⁴⁸ See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.35.7 and 7.10.3. ⁴⁹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.7.9.

⁵⁰ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.43.4, and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 8.1.9.

⁵¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.27, 3.23.58, and Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.9.

⁵² For the conversion of “pagan” philosophers, see Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 1.18.

⁵³ Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 3.14.30, 3.17.1, 6.34.4, 7.

⁵⁴ Words derived from φιλοσοφῶ occur more than sixty times in Socrates. This terminology depicts the philosopher, the subject of philosophy, the philosophizing. In Sozomen the number exceeds 150 times (TLG searches).

⁵⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.34: λόγῳ μόνῳ φιλόσοφος . . . μαθητὴς τὴν δι’ ἔργων φιλοσοφίαν.

part of the brickwork. Looking at them, we may start to wonder where the monks are in this picture.

Socrates, the Historian

Socrates' *Church History* seems to have been finished shortly before his death around 439 CE. However, apart from what he himself tells us, we do not know much about him. Is he *scholasticus*, for example? Besides a few passing references in the Greek tradition, this cognomen is mainly testified in the Armenian version of the history; however, since the term signifies not only a lawyer but may also be a more general term for a learned person, it is still not misleading.⁵⁶ According to Martin Wallraff, Socrates belongs to a "not so small stratum of educated people in Constantinople" in the fifth century who had a traditional Hellenic education. He is someone like Robert Kaster's "hypothetical ordinary grammarian," that is, a *litteratus* who stands "as far above the common people in the city and its hinterland" as he is "below the men who directed the central and provincial administration of the empire."⁵⁷ His position is that of an intermediary, with a certain pride of profession on the one hand, and a certain dependence upon the leaders of the empire on the other. Among his own teachers, he counts two Hellenic priests and grammarians, Helladius and Ammonius.⁵⁸ These are mentioned in passing when Socrates recounts that Helladius had taken pride in killing nine Christians singlehandedly when he was trying in vain to defend the Serapeion in Alexandria against the mob. Although Socrates himself was surely a Christian, he never denigrates non-Christian Hellenes, as Theodoret did, with negative connotations like *apistoi* or *atheoi*.⁵⁹ Instead of simply writing off learned non-Christians as "pagan," Socrates can both praise and criticize them. It is *paideia*, Wallraff concludes, and not religion in itself, which is at the heart of Socrates' invested interest.⁶⁰ Above all, he is a "Bildungsfreund."⁶¹

On encountering an ancient historical work, one should remember to what extent "history was everywhere" in Late Antiquity: on the street, at the court, in the church, and in individual peoples' homes.⁶² In each of these civic settings, paradigms of virtue and wealth were presented to viewers and listeners; one might ask, with Brian Croke, whether or not Socrates' work was read out loud to the "cultured and highly literate aristocracy" as

⁵⁶ See Hansen 1995: lv, and the discussion in Urbainczyk 1996: 13.

⁵⁷ Wallraff 1997: 221, and Kaster 1988: 133. ⁵⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.9.

⁵⁹ Wallraff 1997: 88. ⁶⁰ Wallraff 1997: 98–9. ⁶¹ Wallraff 1997: 91. ⁶² Croke 2007: 573.

were other histories.⁶³ Like Lucian, Socrates claims to write for both high and low, but his primary readership was surely the former. On three occasions, he mentions that a “holy man of God,” Theodore, has commissioned the text, and even requested changes during its composition.⁶⁴ In many ways, Socrates’ history defies a clear distinction between “ecclesiastical history” and “secular history.” Even though “the Church” is his main object,⁶⁵ there is a difference in writing about it post-Constantine. The seven books of Socrates therefore follow the reign of the emperors, who are evaluated in a manner reminiscent of earlier historiography. Not only the role of the emperor but also that of the divine as leading agents in human history remain important in a work like Socrates’.⁶⁶ Arnaldo Momigliano once remarked ironically that Eusebius “knew what proper history was. He knew it was a rhetorical work with a maximum of invented speeches and a minimum of authentic documents.”⁶⁷ Socrates certainly employs the same traditional methods: speeches, letters, and arguments. Moreover, he takes an interest in chronology, and tries to distinguish between the *logos* of a particular narrative and (learned) digressions from the same topic. Part of the same picture is his insistence on accuracy. As if responding to Momigliano, Socrates begins his work with a criticism of Eusebius’ rhetorical style. Even though he walks in Eusebius’ shoes, Socrates wishes to go down a different path: he wants to put stronger emphasis on facts and documentation than his predecessor did.⁶⁸ Later he also criticizes one of his other main sources, Rufinus, for having given chronological misinformation.⁶⁹ By these means, Socrates inscribes himself into his own work as a reliable historian, like Thucydides. Part of his task is the display of public models, good and bad. Among the educated ones, none receives as extensive a treatment as Emperor Julian.

Julian, the Learned Emperor

Of all the portraits of historical figures in the *Church History* of Socrates, none is as focused on the character’s education as that of Emperor Julian. Each stroke of the pen serves to enhance the impression that Julian’s

⁶³ Croke 2010: 31–3. ⁶⁴ See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.6, 6. prol. 1 and 7.48.7.

⁶⁵ For different meanings of *ekklēsia*, see Wallraff 1997: 30–41.

⁶⁶ On the role of the *logos* in steering history according to the Church historians of the fifth century, see Chesnut 1986: 253–5, and Leppin 1996: 211–13.

⁶⁷ Momigliano 1963: 89–90. ⁶⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.1. ⁶⁹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.1.

studies are crucial for his personal development, and eventually also for what Socrates considers as Julian's shortcomings: his turning away from Christianity to Hellenism and his attempt to prohibit Christian teaching. Describing the course of events, Socrates wishes to explain what went wrong with such a well-versed man.

Even though Julian's destiny is exceptional in the context of Socrates' history, the presentation of his life is not atypical. In any historiographical work from the first centuries of the Common Era, we expect a stronger focus on the individual's biography and character. The panegyric, or the defamation (*psogos*), of an emperor, one like Julian, is an unmistakable part of this development. Even as a history of the Church, Socrates' writing is a history of individuals as much as that of any institution.

The main part of Socrates' third book is dedicated to the fame and infamy of Julian. From the outset it is clear that Julian is a "learned man";⁷⁰ indeed, this is his primary trait, and his education is a consistent theme throughout. The longest description of him takes place in the first chapter, where Socrates states that the style of presentation will not be panegyric but rather, historically sound and simple. And yet the topics surely reflect an encomiastic structure, with Julian's character, his birth, and his education as first topics. In that which follows, Julian's educational path is mapped, and simultaneously his road to ruin. Whereas Julian's brother, Gallus, is said to have "followed the teachers"⁷¹ in Ephesus, Julian "has listened to the lecturers"⁷² in Constantinople, more precisely in the schools close to the palace area.⁷³ The progression of Julian's studies seems to follow a familiar pattern, from grammar, to rhetoric and philosophy. At that last stage, Julian is forced to leave the capital for Nicomedia, because Emperor Constantius is said to have taken notice of his relative's progression, and anticipated (even foresaw!) rising clouds on his imperial sky:

Since Julian flourished in the art of speaking, a certain rumor spread among the people that he was competent to administer the affairs of the Romans.⁷⁴

According to Socrates, the problem is twofold. First there are Julian's aspirations. In a sense he had been born with these, surviving an attack on his side of the royal family only because of his young age. But then there

⁷⁰ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.3: ἐλλογίμου ἀνδρός.

⁷¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.9: τοῖς . . . ἐφοῖτα διδασκάλοις.

⁷² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.9: τῶν . . . παιδευτῶν ἡκροᾶτο.

⁷³ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.9: τὰ παιδευτήρια (for the schools).

⁷⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.12: Ἀκμάζοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ τοὺς λόγους φήμη τις εἰς τὸν δῆμον διέτρεχεν, ὥς εἴη ἱκανὸς τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα διοικεῖν.

is also the problem of religion, which is introduced as part of the depiction of Julian's early studies. The repeated mention of religion serves as a preamble to his eventual conversion. According to Socrates, Constantius realized a potential problem from early on and took measures to prevent Julian from having Hellenic teachers,⁷⁵ so that he would not be influenced by these "superstitions."⁷⁶ However, the problem had just begun: when Julian arrives in Nicomedia, he makes friends with the sophist Libanius, who "held lectures there."⁷⁷ This rhetor poses a new threat, Socrates makes clear, and "Julian is forbidden to go to his school, since Libanius' religion was Hellenic."⁷⁸ From now on, Julian leads a double life. He pretends to be a Christian in order not to raise suspicion, but secretly visits both Libanius and a philosopher named Maximus. The problem with Maximus is twofold: his religion and his aspirations for Julian:

Having tasted the words of the philosophers from Maximus, Julian at once imitated the religion of his teacher, who also infused him with the desire to rule.⁷⁹

These scenes are filled with an intense criticism of Julian and his teachers, and clearly show the danger of a misdirected *paideia*. Julian's "profound learning," is now accompanied by flaws: above all, he is "vainglorious."⁸⁰ Such reproval may echo the words in Paul's letter to the Colossians, "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit."⁸¹ But in a much more general sense, Socrates evokes a traditional contrast between true and false religion. In a key scene, Julian shaves his philosopher's beard and becomes a monk and lector in the Church – in order to be able to continue his philosophical studies in secret!⁸² On the one hand, there is a public religion, which is manifested by the official cult in the Christian Church. On the other hand, there are those who hide from the truth, and whose little secrets fill their minds to the point of indecent obsession. It is symptomatic that the teacher whom Julian secretly visits, Maximus the Philosopher, is also accused of magic. *His* philosophy is dangerous, but does it mean that all philosophy is? The short answer is

⁷⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.11: μήπως Ἑλληνος διδασκάλου ἀκροώμενος.

⁷⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.11: δεισιδαιμονία.

⁷⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.17: τὰς διατριβάς ἐποιεῖτο.

⁷⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.15: Ἰουλιανὸς δ' ἐκωλύετο φοιτᾶν παρ' αὐτόν, διότι Λιβάνιος Ἑλλήν τὴν θρησκείαν ἐτύγγανεν ὦν.

⁷⁹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.18: Παρὰ τοῦτ' ὁ δὲ φιλοσόφῳ λόγῳ γευσάμενος εὐθὺς ἐμμεῖτο καὶ τὴν θρησκείαν τοῦ παιδευτοῦ τοῦ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας τῆς βασιλείας ἐμβαλόντος αὐτῷ.

⁸⁰ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.21.16: εὐπαιδευσία and κενόδοξος.

⁸¹ Col. 2.8 [RSV²]. See also *Phil.* 2.3. ⁸² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.20: λεληθότως.

no. The heavy artillery is aimed at secret religious practices, not *paideia* in itself. As if to protect the right to study, a letter by Gregory of Nazianzus is quoted at length. Julian had a double *logos* for studying, Gregory writes. He had one which was more open and good, namely “to explore Greece and the schools there,” and another which was “more hidden,” and therefore potentially dangerous.⁸³

Socrates paints an ambiguous picture of Julian. As his eloquence betrays, Julian is chosen, and yet he chooses wrongly under the influence of false teachers. One can recognize the pattern of his whole life by just a stroke of the pen, and the detailed description of his education serves as a preparation for his unfortunate legislation against the Christians. When these laws are introduced in chapter sixteen of the third book, they are nothing more than a “sly trick,” a “sophism,”⁸⁴ without a chance of having enduring results. A counter-attempt from Christian apologists to create a Christian syllabus for the study of grammar and rhetoric is equally superfluous, according to Socrates. In a longer apology, he defends why *traditional* education is of benefit to Christians. In his own day, this topic probably did not have the same resonance as earlier: Socrates argues only for preserving the tradition, but he still debates as if the opponents were sitting in the same room. He begins with what seems a serious objection, namely, that “Hellenic *paideia* teaches polytheism.”⁸⁵ In his response, Socrates stresses two things. First he makes clear that “Greek learning,”⁸⁶ which by no means is sacred, is still not forbidden in the Christian Scriptures. Anyone reading Paul or the early fathers will see rather that these authors have employed this wisdom for their own ends. On the other hand, anyone reading the philosophers will perceive that they were not far from the truth. Secondly, Socrates argues that the “art of reasoning,”⁸⁷ which is *not* found in the Biblical writings, is still very useful to Christians. Although Christian texts teach piety – which is what matters in the end – they do not help with respect to persuasion and argumentation. Even though these “weapons of the enemies”⁸⁸ are double-edged swords, they are sometimes needed to cut to the heart of the matter, and to reveal truth. As a careful examiner of history, Socrates searches a middle path. He steers clear of what he considers to be “excesses of

⁸³ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.20: εὐπρεπέστερος καθ' ἰστορίαν τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖσε παιδευτηρίων ἀπορρητότερος.

⁸⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.6: σόφισμα.

⁸⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.8: τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν παιδείαν πολυθεῖαν διδάσκουσαν.

⁸⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.8: Ἑλληνικὴ παιδεία.

⁸⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.17: τέχνην λογικὴν.

⁸⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.22: ὅπλα τῶν πολέμιων.

opinion,”⁸⁹ both Julian’s drastic prohibition and the reply from narrow-minded Christians. After all, the main agent of Socrates’ work, “divine Providence,” has paved the way in exactly this manner and allowed Christians to be learned.⁹⁰

... and the Illiterate Monks?

The life of Julian is not the only portrayal of the learning process as a vital but possibly ambiguous part of an influential person’s biography. There are a number of other instances as well, where both orthodox and unorthodox students are put on display as models. The erudition of Didymus, Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom is showcased next to the training of Mani, some Arians, and last but not least, the two bishops named Apollinarius. The fact that both good and bad characters have studied is an expression not only of Socrates’ interest in education, but also of his wish to demonstrate impartiality and wise judgement (more than a supposed tolerance). It takes something more than education to be a good person, but this does not mean that it is not good to study. On the contrary, *paideia* is a ticket to public life, and one of the ways of becoming a role model in society. That we see “orthodox” Christians playing this part in a historiographical work is not a coincidence, but a clear signal of the place they are supposed to take. One way of stating their suitability is the combination of a life of learning with a virtuous life. In another part of this present volume, the “virtue of being uneducated” (among Epicureans and Cynics),⁹¹ or “un-*paideia*-ed” (like the Socrates of Plato),⁹² is discussed in the contributions by Henrik Rydell Johnsen and Urbano. We will see that very same idea at work in the *Church History*, albeit not in contrast with the life of the learned but in tandem. Socrates’ portrait of someone like Didymus is painted with intensely bright colors, highlighting not only his virtuous faith, but also his learnedness. Socrates’ audience must have noted this, and possibly taken his advice about reading Didymus to heart.

But where are the monks in Socrates’ display of different kinds of people in the *Church History*? Do they serve merely as contrasting images to the learned ones? Or are they simply just tucked away in a back room, far from exposure? It is true that monasticism is not given much space in Socrates’ work. Apart from a long chapter on the monks in Egypt, there are only occasional references. And the monks of Constantinople, Socrates’ home

⁸⁹ For this expression, see Croke 2010: 31. ⁹⁰ See Socr. Schol. Hist. eccl. 3.16.7 and 8.

⁹¹ See Rydell Johnsen in this volume. ⁹² See Urbano in this volume.

town, are virtually non-existent. Wallraff has suggested that Socrates perhaps did not have many personal contacts with monks.⁹³ Be that as it may, it is crucial to glimpse the one monk actually turning up in a civic context, because that “monk” is Julian, not yet emperor, who is hiding out in a monk’s cloak. It is a random image flitting past, and therefore hard to use as secure evidence, but it is certainly intriguing that this single reference to “monastic life” outside of a more clearly defined monastic setting points to a well-educated man trying to find a convincing refuge for someone of his standing.⁹⁴ If nothing else, this snapshot can be taken as a contrast to prevailing images of illiterate monks, and a reminder of possible variations. When other monks turn up in the pages of history, we should try to see them within the larger portrayal of *paideia* and power. Basic to this picture is the distinction between literates and illiterates, a distinction which may be used rhetorically for partly different purposes. (Or so it seems, at least, reading Socrates.) I suggest two different usages of this basic distinction that must be considered when we visualize the monks of Socrates. The first I call polemical, and the second, inclusive. Both point to the fact that the appearance of monks in Socrates’ *Church History* is guided by other, overriding concerns about the appropriate models for society. When encountering depictions of individual ascetics, we need to keep the bigger picture in mind. In short, the portrayals of monks shift depending on the rhetorical context.

First of all, we should remember to what extent someone’s learning, or lack of learning, may be employed rhetorically to praise or denounce them. As already said, these are relative categories that can be employed polemically. One such instance is the attempt to discredit Nestorius with his inferior learning. Claiming to have actually read his works, Socrates concludes that Nestorius nonetheless is an “ignorant man.”⁹⁵ Nestorius fears the term *theotokos* like he might a fury;⁹⁶ Socrates scoffs at Nestorius, not because he is under the influence of false teachers, but due to his “great lack of learning.”⁹⁷ As if this was not enough, Socrates continues:

Since he was a naturally eloquent speaker, he was considered well-educated, but the truth is that he was untaught.⁹⁸

⁹³ Wallraff 1997: 117–22. ⁹⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.19: τὸν τῶν μοναχῶν βίον.

⁹⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.32.8: ἀγνοοῦντα . . . τὸν ἄνδρα.

⁹⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.32.9. LSJ translates μορμολυκεῖον as “bogey, hobgoblin,” i.e., culturally frightening characters. Strabo speaks of Mormolyke as a myth (about a female ghost) that is used to scare children. Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.2.8.10.

⁹⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.32.10: ἀμαθίας πολλῆς.

⁹⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.32.10: Φυσικῶς γὰρ εὐλαὸς ὢν πεπαιδεῦσθαι μὲν ἐνομίζετο, τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ ἀνάγωγος ἦν.

One could of course conclude that Socrates considered Nestorius “uneducated in his subject” (i.e., theology) only,⁹⁹ but in my opinion that is to downplay such a direct defamation. On another occasion, we hear of a polemic against the fathers of Nicaea. It is Sabinus, the Bishop of Heracleia, who in his acts of the councils accused the fathers of being “unskilled and simple people.”¹⁰⁰ Socrates takes offense, and to show how far off Sabinus is in his one-sided characterization, he remarks that Sabinus even “runs the risk of accusing Eusebius of Caesarea himself of ignorance.”¹⁰¹ These two instances display how conscious Socrates is of the polemical value of being unskilled, or unlearned. A third example is the famous one of the monks of Egypt turning against the Origenist leaders. It is no surprise, I think, that the monks are depicted as unlearned in a scene where they represent the common people. The main players in chapter seven of the sixth book are the educated elite, with Bishop Theophilus in one corner of the ring and the “tall monks,” in the other. The context is the struggles that tear the Church apart, and Theophilus is the villain, letting his emotions ride him, and fooling others into following him. The “tall monks,” on the other hand, are monastic leaders of high stature.¹⁰² The monks are thrown out onto this battleground. On repeated occasions, some of them react as any dangerous mob would – impulsively.¹⁰³ First these people forsake their monasteries and try to kill Theophilus. But then they are seduced by his “sophisms,”¹⁰⁴ and soon engage on his side in the war that breaks loose. Who are these monks? Socrates once speaks of “simple monks” (in a seeming contrast with others who may not be).¹⁰⁵ Like any idolatrous barbarians, these simple monks appear to be easily persuaded to believe that God is corporeal. Later Socrates depicts a group of “untouched humans who are ‘unskilled in speaking’ and many of them illiterate.”¹⁰⁶ The “unskilled” description is of course a quotation from 2 Corinthians 11.6, but also, which should be noted, a counter-image to the erudition of the “tall monks,” who were “excellent in both life and speech.”¹⁰⁷ In contrast to their leaders, these

⁹⁹ Chadwick 2003: 37 (my emphasis). ¹⁰⁰ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.24: ἰδιώτας καὶ ἀφελεῖς.

¹⁰¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.9.28: κινδυνεύων καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Καισαρέα Εὐσέβιον ἐπὶ ἀγνοσίᾳ διαβάλλειν.

¹⁰² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7. ¹⁰³ See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.14!

¹⁰⁴ See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.24, for Theophilus’ successful attempt to fool the majority of monks.

¹⁰⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.3: τῶν ἀπλοϊκῶν ἀσκητῶν.

¹⁰⁶ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.21: ἀνθρώπους ἀκεραίους μὲν, ἰδιώτας δὲ τῷ λόγῳ, τοὺς πολλοὺς δὲ ἀγραμμάτων δντας.

¹⁰⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.12: Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ βίῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἐκπρέποντες (my emphasis).

monks are the “masses”, *hoi polloi*.¹⁰⁸ The “simple monks” are at the center of Socrates’ story, but even in his writing they do not represent the full body of monks, which seems to consist of both unlearned people and erudite leaders.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, the simple ones are the factor that explains how the situation could spin out of control, and using this trope, Socrates is able to criticize Theophilus.

Next to using the distinction between learned and ignorant polemically, Socrates also has a second usage, an apologetic one, which I call inclusive. It consists of putting the two groups next to one another, and seeing them as part of the same society. An ideal inclusivism might be seen as a particularly Christian trope (a “gospel for everyone”), but a “totalizing discourse” is equally valid from an imperial point of view.¹¹⁰ A first example of this inclusive approach is Socrates’ statement of intention in the *Prologue* to the sixth book. His work should be of use to both “the learned and the unlearned.”¹¹¹ And when he opposes Sabinus (mentioned above), he claims that the fathers of the Council of Nicaea were both, since “some were distinguished for wisdom of speech, and some for steadfastness of life.”¹¹² While Sabinus had argued that all the participants at the council were “unskilled and simple people,”¹¹³ Socrates makes clear that there were *also* cultivated individuals in attendance and, moreover, that the others should still receive praise for being virtuous. Life and learning are paralleled in this instance, and Emperor Constantine is the one able to create unity between both groups. However, there are negative examples as well. Philip of Side, another author, is so intent on proving his learnedness, Socrates thinks, that he is “useless . . . to the ignorant and the learned alike.”¹¹⁴ And Emperor Julian is accused only of having tried to persuade the unlearned

¹⁰⁸ On another occasion they are also contrasted with others who had “exercised minds,” and therefore were not misled by Theophilus. See Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.25: γεγυμνασμένον . . . τὸν νοῦν.

¹⁰⁹ For a similar conclusion with regard to the *Apothegmata Patrum*, see Larsen 2008: 21–30.
¹¹⁰ Cameron 1991: 215.

¹¹¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6. prol. 5: τοῖς μὲν εὐπαιδεύτοις . . . τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώταις.

¹¹² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.27: οἱ μὲν διέπρεπον σοφίας λόγῳ, οἱ δὲ βίου στερρότητι. Hansen argues that this paragraph, which is missing in the Armenian version, should be deleted, because it is a repetition of what has already been said. Here, I would disagree with him, because the quoted phrase – which is not repeated – makes particular sense in this setting, as part of the discussion about the fathers of Nicaea as unlearned. See Maraval 2004: 100, n. 1.

¹¹³ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.24: ἰδιώτας καὶ ἀφελείς.

¹¹⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 7.27.5: ἀχρεῖον αὐτὴν καὶ ἰδιώταις καὶ εὐπαιδεύτοις.

with his discourses.¹¹⁵ In all these instances, Socrates maintains an inclusive view in which elite leaders (both authors and emperors) must be able to keep two thoughts in mind at the same time, and preserve unity by acknowledgment of the perspectives of both the masses, *hoi polloi*, and the elite. But where are the monks within this wider framework? In the previous example from Alexandria, I argued for a distinction between simple monks and their learned leaders. Turning to the main depiction of monasticism in the fourth book, I think that we can observe a similar pattern.

Instead of considering all the monks in every corner of the world as the same, like Sozomen does, Socrates provides a single example from Egypt.¹¹⁶ The passage is a mixed bag of influences, not least Evagrius' *Praktikos* and *Gnostikos*, but these different sources (and their supposed Origenist bias) need not concern us here;¹¹⁷ after all, it is Socrates' own arrangement. The chapter could be characterized as a digression, or *excursus*, a motif often used by historians.¹¹⁸ Here it is clearly put at the end of the presentation, when Socrates says that it is time to return to the main story.¹¹⁹ Perhaps one could say that it is a digression with an ethnographic slant. Although Egypt had long been part of the empire, it was still a *different* place where one could expect to meet strange beasts, such as the Indian sages, the "naked ones" of Egypt, or Christian hermits.¹²⁰ And yet, despite an insistence on a different way of life being led by the monks, Socrates does not depict illiteracy as a common feature. In the very first story, we meet a couple on their wedding night, and hear Amoun convincing his newly wedded bride about a life of chastity. Tellingly, he does so by referring to a book (comprising some of the Pauline Epistles).¹²¹ Among the "multitude of monks," there is only one monk who is called "illiterate," Pambo;¹²² this example is soon followed by the learned Piterus, a man who is said to be "versed in many of the natural sciences," and who also knows how to make use of his knowledge (while praying).¹²³ With these two examples, life and learning are paralleled again. A little later in the text, Evagrius is introduced, and here the parallel is spelled out even more clearly as being a philosophy of words and a philosophy of deeds.¹²⁴ Having

¹¹⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.30, 39.

¹¹⁶ For a comprehensive view of this chapter in the context of the other Church historians, see Martin 2011: 99–103.

¹¹⁷ See remarks about Socrates' sources in Hansen 1995: liii, 249–57.

¹¹⁸ See Nobbs 1986: 1–11; Stevenson 2002: 54–5. ¹¹⁹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.80.

¹²⁰ See Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* books 3 and 6.

¹²¹ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.2–11; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 8.

¹²² Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.22: ἀγράμματος. For the virtue of being uneducated, see also Rydell Johnsen, in this volume.

¹²³ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.29: Πιτηροῦς πολλὰ θεωρήματα φυσικά ἠπίστατο.

¹²⁴ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.34.

learned the first, Evagrius now needs to practice the second. A similar distinction is made in the longer extract from the *Gnostikos*, where Basil is quoted as saying that there are two kinds of *gnôsis*, human and divine. While the former is strengthened by “study and exercise,” the latter is reinforced by “righteousness, lack of anger and mercy.”¹²⁵ In all these instances, I do not think that we should see the life of learning as opposed to the life of virtue: rather, they are juxtaposed. As long as the priorities are right, both ways of living are legitimate. After all, the monks listed in the latter part of the chapter under consideration are well-known intellectuals following in the footsteps of Origen (including Ammonius, one of the “tall monks”).¹²⁶ It is also no coincidence that the portraits coming after the sketch of the Egyptian monks are those of the most learned Christians: Didymus, the Cappadocians, and Gregory Thaumaturgus. Through these intellectuals the monastic movement is given a public face without losing the heart of the matter: there is room for both the simple and the learned in the monastic society.

In the case of Didymus there is even a scene where the juxtaposition of learning and life is made visible, namely the encounter between Didymus and Antony. This is another example of a parallel life that displays the need for two ways of living that complement one another. In Socrates, Antony is a demon-fighter and miracle-maker, that is, someone with a specific insight into divine things, rather than into human philosophy.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, with this spiritual perception Antony recognizes “the intelligence of the man,” i.e., Didymus.¹²⁸ The holy man confirms the learnedness of a Christian teacher. At this moment in history, a learned and a (presumably) unlearned man stand next to each other. Both are included.

Conclusion

With these examples, I have pointed out how the portrayal of the monks is framed by a discourse about *paideia* and power. Ideally, the society at large should be ruled by an educated elite which includes both the privileged and

¹²⁵ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.66–7: μελέτη καὶ γυμνασία . . . δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀσorgeia καὶ ἔλεος.

¹²⁶ He is said to have visited Rome without going to its most famous sites (apart from the Church of Peter and Paul). Since he is a learned person, he is expected to study (ιστορεῶ) the Classical sites as well. Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.72–6.

¹²⁷ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 1.21. See also his encounter with a philosopher in 4.23.43–4. For a discussion, see Rubenson 1995 and 2013b: 75–96.

¹²⁸ Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.25.9: τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρός σύνεσιν.

the masses, each in their own right. In this respect, the monastery is not different. Next to the simple monks, therefore, we find a new class of well-educated Christian teachers who are closely associated with monks and who are ready to become the movement's leaders. Thus, now there is a role to imitate for any high-class auditor of Socrates' text. Socrates seems to insist that a wise viewer of the circumstances of history must take into account people who are highly regarded for both their learning and their virtue. As a reliable historian, Socrates seeks a middle ground between education, *paideia*, and belief, *pistis*. His ideal is a fusion of Hellenic and Christian horizons, a preservation of Classical *paideia* combined with Christian faith.

One might wonder where a similar kind of reasoning would take us if we continue studying Sozomen and Theodoret more closely. Somewhat tentatively, I suggest that they are balancing the "simple" with the "learned" like Socrates. Reading them, one sees an additional perspective also, namely, the more pronounced emphasis on a monastic *philosophy*. Although this is a well-known change of outlook, I believe that it is one that is worth further consideration. As I have tried to point out elsewhere with regard to Theodoret's *History of the Monks*, there is a very deliberate attempt to present monasticism as an organized undertaking in texts that utilize philosophical images. At least Theodoret is careful to situate his most extreme monks in a very specific human and civil setting: the monastery.¹²⁹ In many respects, the most prominent monks resemble the leaders of one specific institution in the *polis*: the philosophical school.¹³⁰ Like the philosophers, the monks are part of a longstanding tradition, with divine founders. And because they are raised above the ordinary, they can intervene in a time of crisis and contribute to the preservation of society. In Theodoret, monks are able to both ward off Persian invasions and spread civilization to far-off barbarian villages. Turning to Sozomen, there seems to be a similar wish to offer a rationale for monasticism. Here is a new civil institution, legalized and legislated by an emperor who stays in close contact with important protagonists of the new movement. It has its own style, to be sure, but exactly as such it is also useful for the spread of the empire. We judge by what we see. But sometimes we do not see what is in front of our eyes. So perhaps we should look again.

¹²⁹ Westergren 2012. ¹³⁰ See also Urbano 2013: 286–93, and in this volume.

PART II



Elementary Education and Literacy

4 | The Educational and Cultural Background of Egyptian Monks

ROGER BAGNALL

My perhaps rashly broad subject is hardly new. Controversy about the educational background, learning, and intellectualism of the monks of Egypt may be nearly as old as monasticism itself. There was certainly much ambivalence expressed in Late Antiquity about whether *paideia* in the Classical sense played any legitimate role in the formation of a monk, a point Henrik Rydell Johnsen's paper in this volume treats in more detail. But even in matters of Christian theology it was far from clear to everyone that a little learning was a positive thing. In ancient accounts of the Origenist controversy, for example, we find, to quote Susan Wessel, that "Socrates plainly associated simplicity with ecclesiastical unity and correct understanding, while he understood intellectualism to be the source of doctrinal confusion and theological dispute. Sozomen, in contrast, did not hesitate to criticize the simple, anti-intellectual monks in *his* account of the Origenist affair."¹

Context: Background of Issue

If this is an old subject, however, it is also one renewed within the past few decades by fundamental discoveries and new approaches. Some of these come from within the study of monasticism and its literature. As I am an interloper in that field, I shall cite only an idiosyncratic sampling of works that have had an important impact on my own thinking. Two of these concern a couple of the most emblematic figures of early Egyptian asceticism. In the first place, naturally, is the decisive study of Antony by Samuel Rubenson, in which he concluded that "the letters must be attributed to an educated monastic leader of importance, acquainted with the philosophical ideas of his time, as well as with the Arian heresy." There is no reason not to accept the identification of this monastic leader with Antony, and thus to recognize that he had a good education in Greek to a high level.² In the

¹ Wessel 2004: 77; see Westergren's contribution to this volume, Chapter 3 above, for an alternate reading of Socrates' understanding of the relationship between intellectual and monastic virtue.

² Rubenson 1995: 42; Wipszycka 2009: 235–7, admits the force of Rubenson's arguments but is unwilling to discard the tradition that makes Antony a non-hellenophone.

course of the discussion leading up to this conclusion, Rubenson points out the weak supports for any view founded on the literary sources that sees the early monks as both uneducated and rejecting education.³

The greatest of all writers in Coptic, Shenoute, has undergone a no less fundamental re-evaluation in the last quarter century. Far from being a representative of an anti-Greek nationalist Coptic culture, he was, as Stephen Emmel has said, “well educated in Greek.”⁴ Emmel regards this view as now “generally accepted among scholars” and argues that he was educated in Panopolis itself. Similarly, Tito Orlandi has noted that not only Greek culture but specifically Greek rhetorical training is clearly visible in Shenoute’s works.⁵

Finally, I would observe that the rhetoric about monastic educational simplicity is of a piece with that concerning poverty; indeed, the two were obviously closely linked in ancient society. In this respect, the remarks of James Goehring are worth quoting: “As the monastic movement became more complex and wealthier, its literary memory fashioned its past as simpler and more austere. As the later basilicas became in fact more ornate, the earlier basilica became in the imagination more primitive.”⁶ At a broader level of description, Ewa Wipszycka has insisted in several works on the presence of a high level of literacy among monks.⁷

But all of these developments in the scholarship of monasticism either concern towering and thus exceptional figures or leave us at a level of generality, where we can have little tangible sense of what ordinary monks brought to their communities in the way of educational background. It thus seems worth asking if we can get closer to the quotidian reality of the monks by looking at the documentary sources.⁸ I shall attempt to do this at a level of granularity that may require patience from some readers, but that I believe will lead to a rather coherent picture of some interest and significance.

Indeed, no less fundamental than the new directions in thinking about monasticism have been the developments in papyrology and the study of Graeco-Roman Egypt in the same decades. These have transformed many aspects of our understanding of the culture of this society and the ways by which individuals were educated within it. These years have also brought a substantial increase in the amount of documentary

³ See also Gemeinhardt’s contribution to this volume, Chapter 2 above. ⁴ Emmel 2002: 99.

⁵ Orlandi 1997: 76. ⁶ Goehring 2007: 405.

⁷ Wipszycka 2009: 361–5, with citations of earlier work.

⁸ On the shift in studies of Egyptian monasticism to take documentary sources into account, see Wipszycka 2004: 834; See also Larsen and Maravela’s contributions to this volume.

material available for the study of Christianity (and Manicheism) in the period from Diocletian to the Council of Ephesos and the Council of Chalcedon. From these years have come the editing of the archive of Nepheros,⁹ the publication of the Manichaean literary and documentary texts from Kellis,¹⁰ and the identification and preliminary study of the archive of the holy man John – whether of Lykopolis or of the Hermopolite is debated, but relatively unimportant for our purposes.¹¹

No less important from the point of view of the subject that I shall be considering is the explosion in our ability to look at papyrus texts as physical objects. This was brought about first by the lowering of the cost of printing illustrations in books, which led to a great growth in the visual content of printed editions from the 1970s on. It has been accelerated still more by the digital revolution and the widespread availability of images of papyri: a process still under way, as many critical collections are almost wholly undigitized even now, and some impose onerous conditions and costs on scholars using digital images. (The British Library and the Bodleian are particular laggards in both respects.)¹²

The most fundamental contributions to rethinking ancient education and culture have been those of Raffaella Cribiore and Jean-Luc Fournet. Many readers will be familiar with Cribiore's two books and numerous articles on education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, which have for the first time given us a coherent and convincing picture of the stages by which young pupils learned first to write, as it seems, and then to read; we can now use a well-developed typology of handwritings.¹³ At the same time, the contents of education with the grammarian and then the rhetorician have become clearer. The discovery of a classroom for the teaching of rhetorical verse composition in our excavations at Amheida (in the Dakhla oasis) has given a wholly unexpected gift to our ability to visualize the environment of education at the most advanced levels found in provincial towns (Figure 4.1).¹⁴

Fournet's work, in turn, has centered on the archive of Dioskoros, the notary, village notable, and poet, active in the Antaiopolite village of Aphrodite and, for one stretch, in the provincial capital Antinoopolis,

⁹ Kramer and Shelton 1987.

¹⁰ Worp 1995; Gardner 1996; Gardner, Alcock, and Funk 1999; see also Stefaniw's contribution to this volume.

¹¹ Zuckerman 1994; van Minnen 1994.

¹² The most important finding tool for these images is www.papyri.info.

¹³ Cribiore 1996; Cribiore 2001.

¹⁴ Cribiore, Davoli, and Ratzan 2008; Cribiore and Davoli 2013; Davoli and Cribiore 2010.

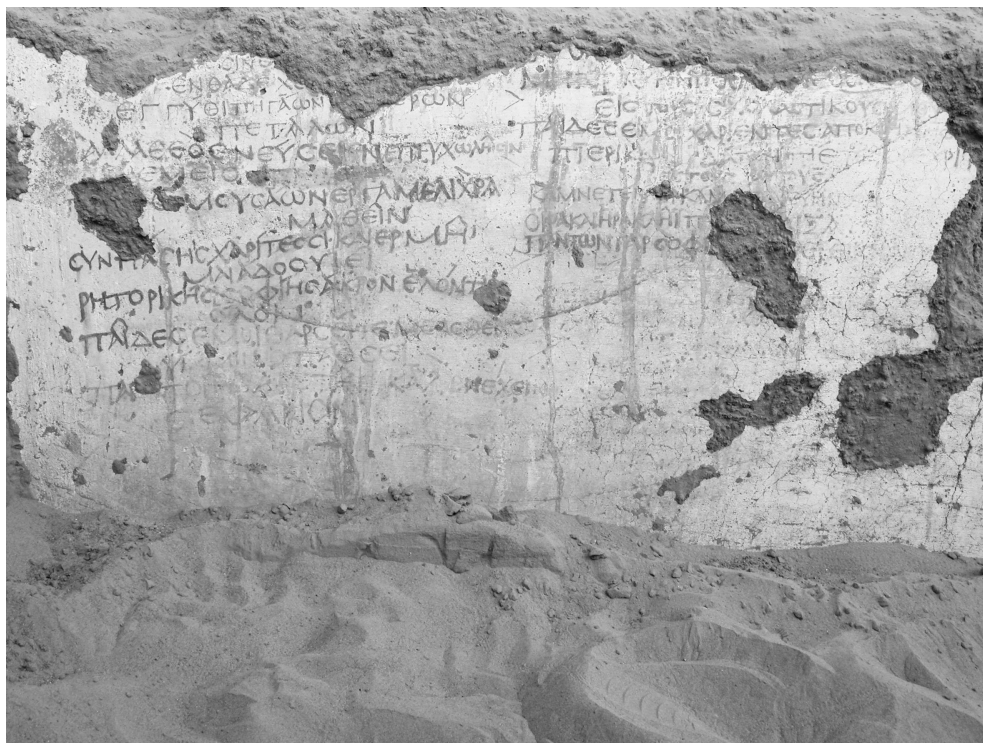


Figure 4.1 Classroom wall excavated at Amheida. © Roger Bagnall

during the middle years of the sixth century.¹⁵ Fournet has also looked at many of the broader issues raised by the Dioskoros archive. At the International Congress of Papyrology in Warsaw (August 2013), he gave a magisterial summation of his thinking, delineating what he calls a documentarist approach to literary culture, or *paideia*. At the same time, it represents the identification and study of a “literarization” of documentary practice that begins to be visible in the third century.¹⁶ He calls for documentary editors to be more alert to signs of *paideia*, of this literarization, in the texts they edit. Broadly speaking, he divides the signs of this literary flavor into three: content, language, and format. These have numerous subdivisions, but they include the use of literary (especially poetic) words, the presence of citations, Atticism, the layout on the papyrus sheet, the use of diacritics, and a variety of other less common factors. Private letters and petitions are the locus of choice for these phenomena, although they are not limited to these document types.

¹⁵ Particularly his monumental work of 1999. ¹⁶ See already Fournet 1992.

In Fournet's thinking, what we see in the flowering of these literary traits in documents reflects the educational experiences of the urban elite, especially of the bouletic class, the group of city councilors. As I have argued in an earlier paper,¹⁷ this *paideia* was not limited to that high elite but reached as well some members of a stratum of society that has yet to be adequately defined by historians of Roman Egypt, but which I call the manager class. In this I include the collectors who managed the taxation system for the elite who held liturgical positions, the representatives of landlords who dealt with their tenants in leasing and collecting rents, and a variety of business agents of other types. Already in early Roman times we can see indications that these men were sometimes recipients of a literary education and continued to prize their learning throughout their careers.

We have at our disposal, then, a rich array of recently published texts, newly available images, and conceptual resources with which to look at the environment in which the early Egyptian monks were formed. From our knowledge of the society of late Roman Egypt, we should anticipate a high level of differentiation. Society was highly stratified, with educational opportunities very unequally available in a range of organizational and physical settings.¹⁸ It has come to be recognized that monasticism shared generally in this stratification and differentiation: we cannot expect uniform patterns of housing, eating, drinking, and clothing among the more independent ascetics, the members of small urban communities, the occupants of the *lauras*, and the rank and file of larger cenobitic establishments. The same, one may assume, was true of their educational and cultural backgrounds.

To try to bring these sweeping generalizations into better focus, I shall look at a number of the Christian letters of the fourth century through the lens of the toolkits I have described, applying what one might call a Fournet grid. Some of the letters are by monks, some are addressed to monks, some are of indeterminate origin. I shall try to determine to what extent one may find the traits that Fournet has enumerated and what we can learn from these about the individual letter writers. Because persons writing to monks must have been assuming that what they did would be intelligible to their addressees, I have included them as revelatory of the cultural world of the monks. Wipszycka has remarked on the high volume of correspondence to and from monks, and at the same time she has observed that the quality of

¹⁷ Bagnall 2011a. The "further" in the title refers to my earlier remarks on this subject in Bagnall 2009.

¹⁸ See generally Bagnall 1993, esp. 208–29.

the letters suggests that the level of education of their authors was not high.¹⁹

Examples

Anyone familiar with the work that Cribiore and I did on women's letters²⁰ will know that it is generally difficult to be sure who actually wrote a letter on papyrus. It could be the nominal author himself or herself, it could be another family member with greater skills, or it could be an employee or slave with such skills. Letters could be written autograph, dictated, or composed by an amanuensis from sketchy instructions. I shall take these difficulties into account in this discussion, but it should be stated that it is only rarely possible to be sure that our letters are autographs of monks. From my perspective, however, this does not matter very much. For one thing, any amanuensis of a monk was probably also a monk. For another, there are clear signs in the papyri that the cultures of those writing in monasteries and those writing to monasteries shared many characteristics and are indeed hardly to be distinguished with any clarity.

To help clarify the approach that I will be taking, I present one of Fournet's examples for the use of a literary hand in correspondence, *P. Herm.* 5 (Figure 4.2). You can see not only that it has an elegant detached script readily paralleled in book hands of the late third and early fourth century, but that the writer has used high dots for punctuating clauses, rough breathing in a couple of cases where the word might potentially be ambiguous, and even an acute accent on εὐθύμει (be of good cheer) in line 15, to make it clear that we are dealing with the imperative rather than the third person indicative, which would have had a circumflex over the ultima. Even though, as Fournet observes, this is the work of a secretary rather than of the nominal author, the impression to be made is clear. The writer's plane is distinctly superior.

We will look at a number of examples in order to begin to tease out what can be learned by applying the Fournet grid to monastic letters. *P. Nag Hamm.* 69 (Figure 4.3) is a letter written by, or in the name of, the monk Sansnos. The hand is not very attractive, an experienced but somewhat ungainly semi-cursive letter hand, and the editor notes that it is "written with such indifferent use of spelling and grammar that the sense of some

¹⁹ Wipszycka 2009: 364. ²⁰ Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: esp. 41–55.

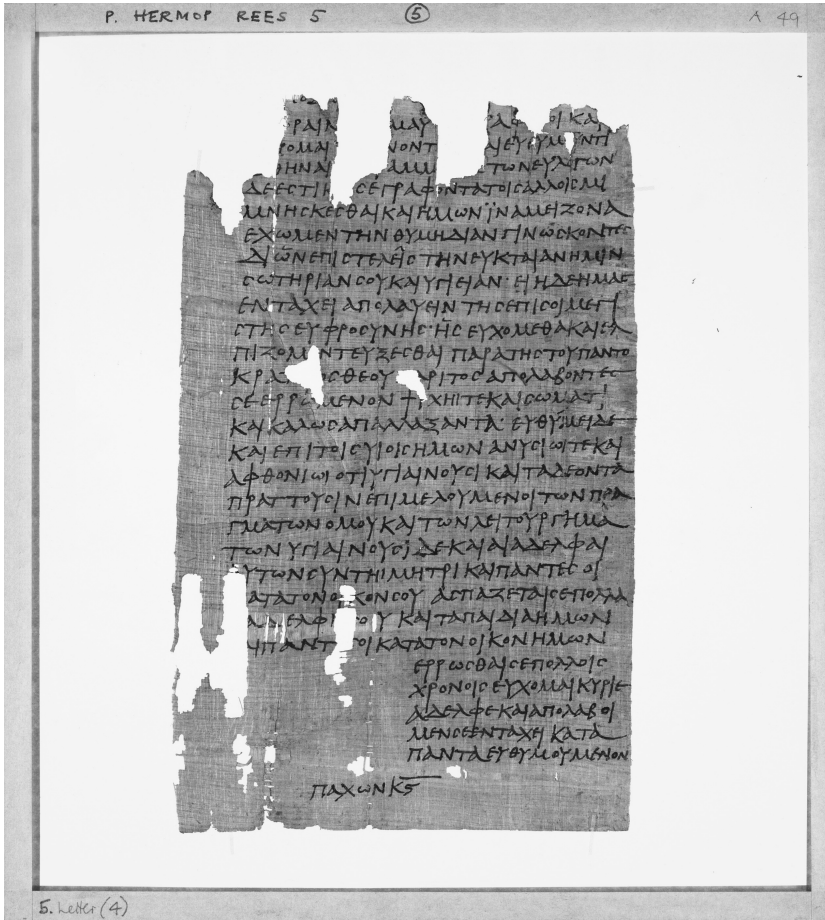


Figure 4.2 *P.Herm. 5*. The John Rylands Library (JRL1201518). Copyright of the University of Manchester

passages is doubtful.” The layout shows no customization, except that the largely lost salutations at the end were placed flush right. There are no *nomina sacra* preserved (ἐν κυρίῳ [in the Lord] is written in full in line 2), and no other diacritics are visible. No vocabulary of particular interest appears. As the editor’s complaint suggests, the spelling is highly phonetic, and there are omissions, insertions, and a weak command of syntax. In sum, this text checks none of the boxes and makes a poor impression of the writer’s education. Nonetheless, the hand is practiced enough and the prose brisk and tolerably fluent.

The immediately preceding text in this volume, *P.Nag Hamm. 68* (Figure 4.4), written to Sansnos by a Harpokration who may also be a monk, provides

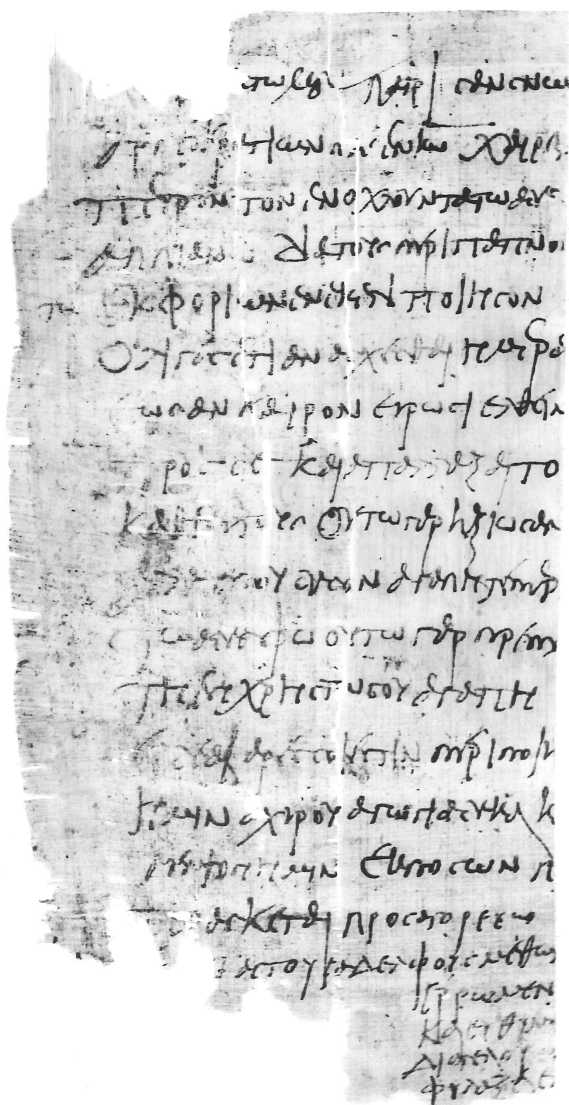
VII,8^e→

Figure 4.4 P.Nag Hamm. 68

an interesting contrast. The hand is businesslike, but it has far more style than that of Sansnos's letter, including a capital omega at one sentence beginning. The salutation is again flush right. This writer uses the *nomen sacrum* correctly in line 2 for κύριος (lord), although in invoking Christ

later in the letter he writes the name in full. The Greek is good, with a well-constructed subjunctive clause and the definite article τὸν written in the margin at one point, suggesting that the writer reread the letter and sought to improve it. The vocabulary is that of business, apart from specifically Christian references. As AnneMarie Luijendijk has shown, the use of abbreviated *nomina sacra* shows that the writer had received a Christian education, but it appears that the practice was taught at a fairly elementary level.²¹ Errors in its usage probably also reflect the fact that it was not an advanced skill. For example, we find the abbreviated form $\overline{\epsilon\nu\kappa\upsilon}$ (in the lord) in *P.Nag Hamm.* 66 (Figure 4.5), written in a decent, rapid business hand, with the greeting in line 2 centered on its own line, and “reasonably good Greek” (in the editor’s words), mostly correct even if not very stylish.

In general, the Nag Hammadi letters fit within the spectrum of those I have described. The hands range from good business with the occasional flourish to more uneven variants. Centering or more often flush-right location of the closing salutations is normal. Diacritics are rare apart from *nomina sacra* and an isolated diaeresis in *P.Nag Hamm.* 70. Spelling and grammar vary from weak to fairly good. Vocabulary is almost without exception pedestrian, although $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\lambda\alpha$ (*pánpolla*) in *P.Nag Hamm.* 67 suggests aspirations, and in *P.Nag Hamm.* 70 we find the hapax $\theta\alpha\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ (*thalpízō*). There are a couple of abbreviation strokes that belong to a business rather than literary milieu. Nothing suggests that any of the writers had gone beyond an elementary education to study with a grammarian. On the other hand, the handwriting is in general fluent and experienced; these were not people who wrote rarely.²²

When we turn to the Nephros archive, from the monastery of Phathor in the Herakleopolite nome, we see a slightly different picture. *P.Neph.* 11 (Figure 4.6) comes from the monk Kapiton. It is written in a well-formed letter hand of some clarity; its layout is simple except that $\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$ (greetings) in line 5 is spaced out to fill the line, allowing the body to start on a new line. *Nomina sacra* are handled correctly; diaeresis is used; and a line is placed over an undeclinable name to mark it as Egyptian. The vocabulary is unremarkable, but there are citations of 1 and 2 Timothy in the course of the letter. The overall impression is of a somewhat higher degree of ability than in the Nag Hammadi letters, but there are no signs of higher literary formation.

²¹ Luijendijk 2008: 67–9; As Larsen has repeatedly argued (see Larsen 2006a, 2013a and 2013b) and the present volume suggests, this raises the question of whether such elementary education occurred in the monastery.

²² See also Lundhaug and Jenott’s contributions to this volume.

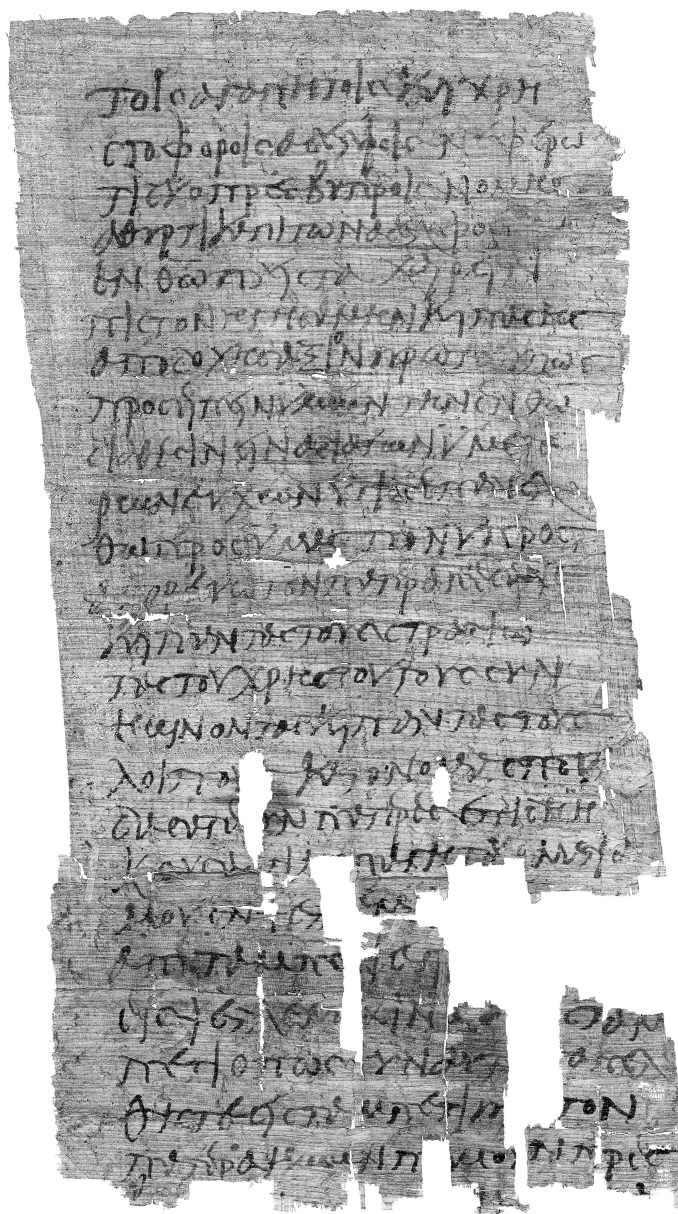


Figure 4.6 *P.Neph. 11*. © Institut für Papyrologie, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

P.Neph. 12 (Figure 4.7) is also from a monk, Serapion. It is written in a fast cursive, very practiced but not very attractive. The greetings at the end are indented. *Nomina sacra* are present, along with the high apostrophe dividing double consonants and the use of a high dot after a name to

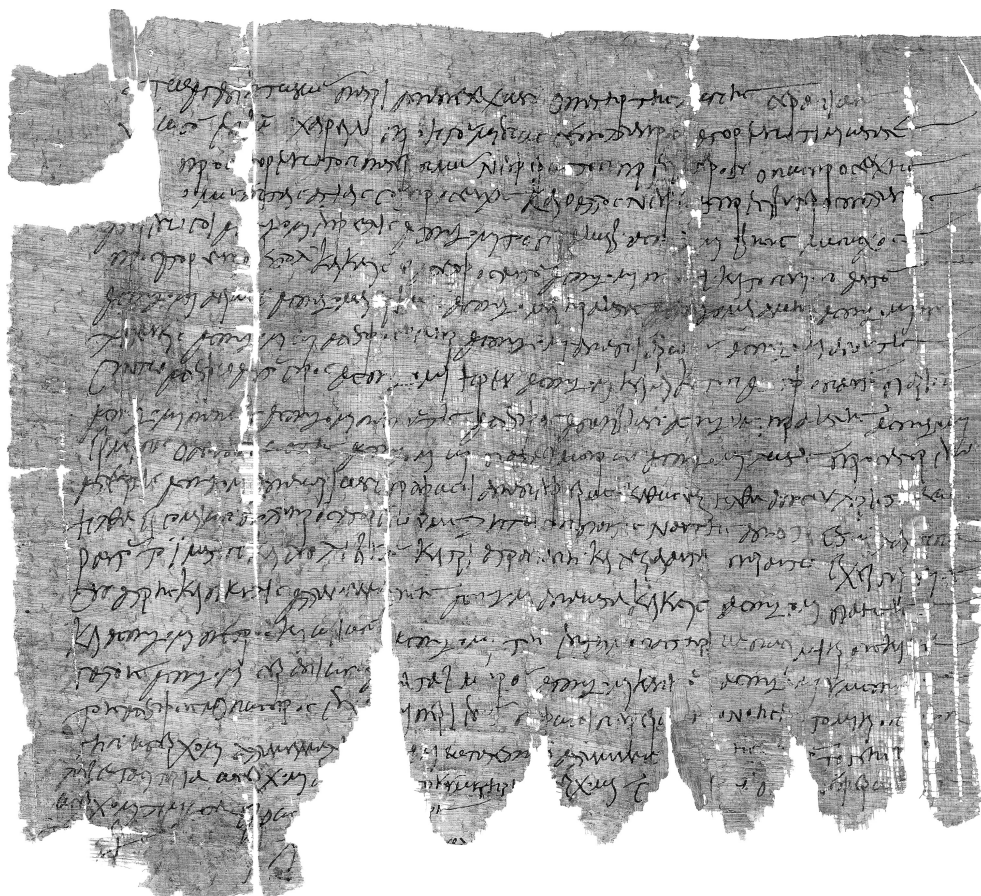


Figure 4.7 P.Neph. 12. © Institut für Papyrologie, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

indicate breaks in the series of greetings. An apostrophe after undeclined Iakob is also present.²³ To offset these signs of learning, the spelling is often wrong and the writer seems to have little idea of case endings. The vocabulary is pedestrian. The writer twice uses a Coptic *hori* in the place name Tahmouro, which he does not spell the same way in the two occurrences. More interestingly, the name Hor is written without termination but with $\pi\alpha$ (*pa*) between it and the place name, to indicate “the man of.”²⁴ The writer is thus capable of a bit of code-switching and was

²³ See *P.Kell.* IV, p. 21 on these marks (in the Kellis Agricultural Account Book) as intended “to represent the writer’s indication that the name is Egyptian and lacking in Greek declensional terminations.” Obviously a Biblical name derived from Hebrew could be given the same treatment.

²⁴ This possessive is found in early Ptolemaic texts to indicate filiation (“the son of”); see Muhs 2010: 191–5.

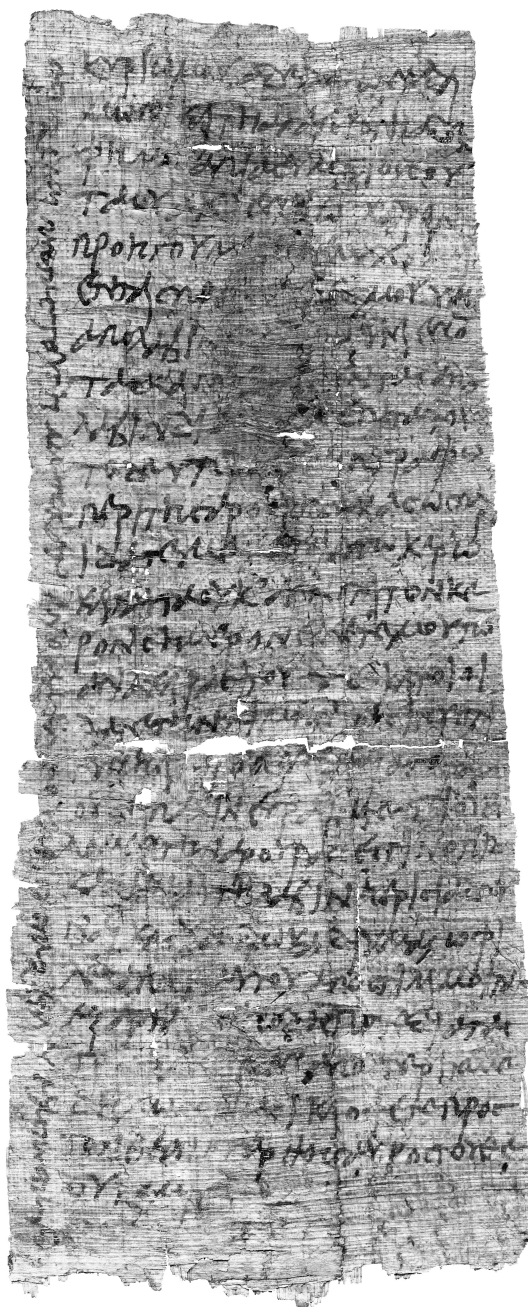


Figure 4.8 *P.Neph. 18*. With the permission of Universitätsbibliothek Trier

probably comfortable in both Greek and Egyptian. Even if his use of diacritical marks suggests a bit more education than Kapiton had, it does not seem likely that this came from the grammarian's classroom, from which he would have acquired a better command of Greek accidence.

A third likely religious, a woman named Taouak, is the author of *P.Neph.* 18 (Figure 4.8). It is written in a business cursive (called "unbeautiful" by the editor, who thinks it much worse than the letters written by men: not entirely justifiably, in my view), with no interesting spacing practices. *Nomina sacra* and medial apostrophe are found. The vocabulary is unremarkable. The grain measure artaba is abbreviated, suggesting documentary experience. An active form is used in place of the middle in one instance, and the editor's judgment of the language is unfavorable: "volkstümlich, manchmal fehlerhaft."

It is interesting to compare the group of letters written by Paulos to the monastery with the texts above. He was clearly a layman and spent considerable time in Alexandria. His letters are full of requests to the monks for their prayers, from which his lay status is obvious, but also of business matters. His letters are not all in the same hand.²⁵ Indeed, of the eight well-preserved letters, I am not certain that any two are in the same hand. Paulos clearly had access to a fairly numerous range of secretaries.

P.Neph. 1 (Figure 4.9) is written in a rapid, official-looking, cursive hand, somewhat stylish but deteriorating in the last part. The layout is crowded, and two lines are written in the left margin perpendicular to the main text. We should subtract points for this. *Nomina sacra* are present, and the apostrophe is used to mark both undeclined names and between double consonants. The Greek is largely correct, although the article is used in place of the relative in one instance. The letter begins with an elaborate, rhetorical prooemium but is not otherwise marked by literary vocabulary. Terminal nu is replaced a number of times by a supralinear stroke, a documentary habit.

P.Neph. 2 (Figure 4.10) is written in a similar hand, but a more careful version with better spacing, until line 8, when the hand becomes markedly more rapid and cursive. It is hard to say for sure if this is the same writer changing styles or a different writer, but I think the latter. This is thus likely to be Paulos' own hand. Apart from the centering of the concluding salutations to the right, there is nothing remarkable about layout or vocabulary, although the Greek is correct; no diacritics are used.

²⁵ Kramer and Shelton (1987), p. 24.

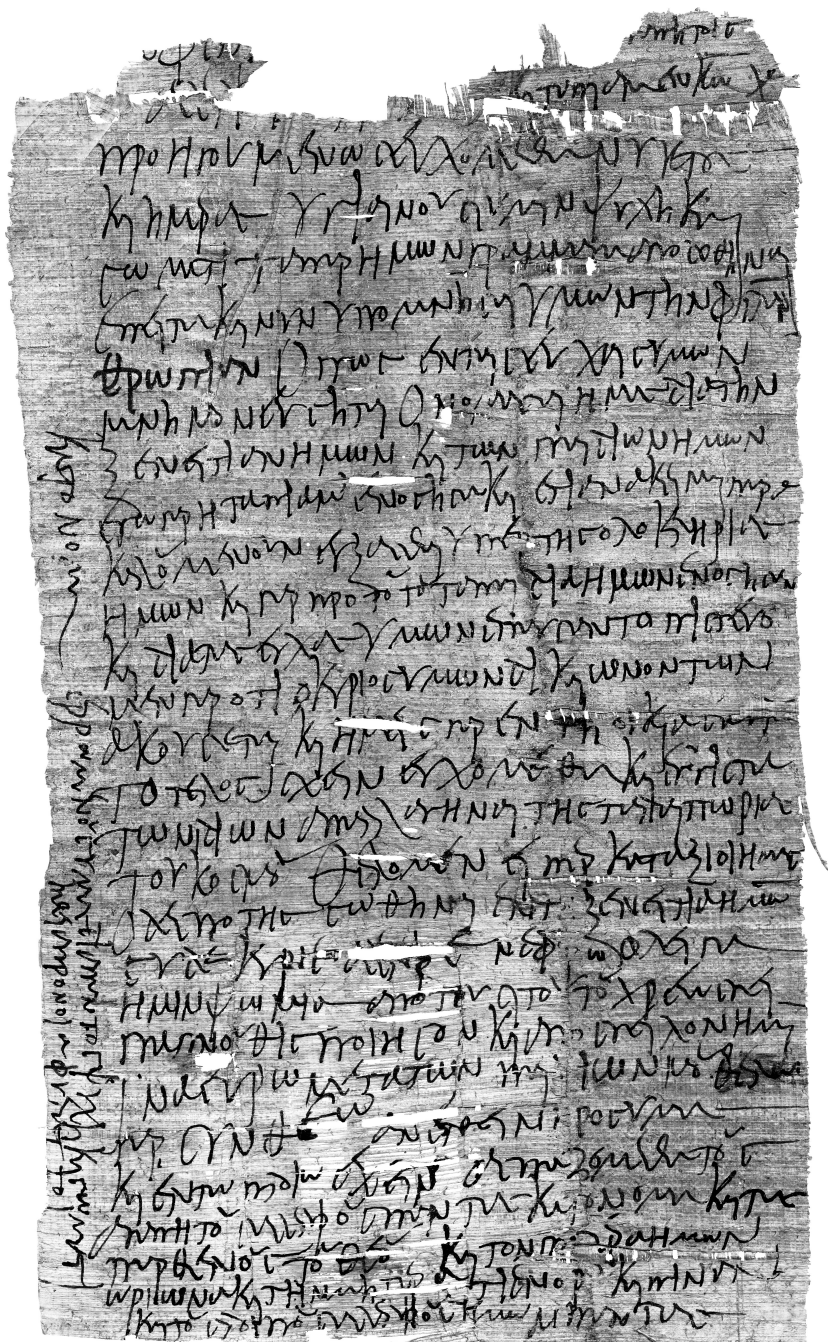


Figure 4.9 P.Neph. 1. With the permission of Universitätsbibliothek Trier

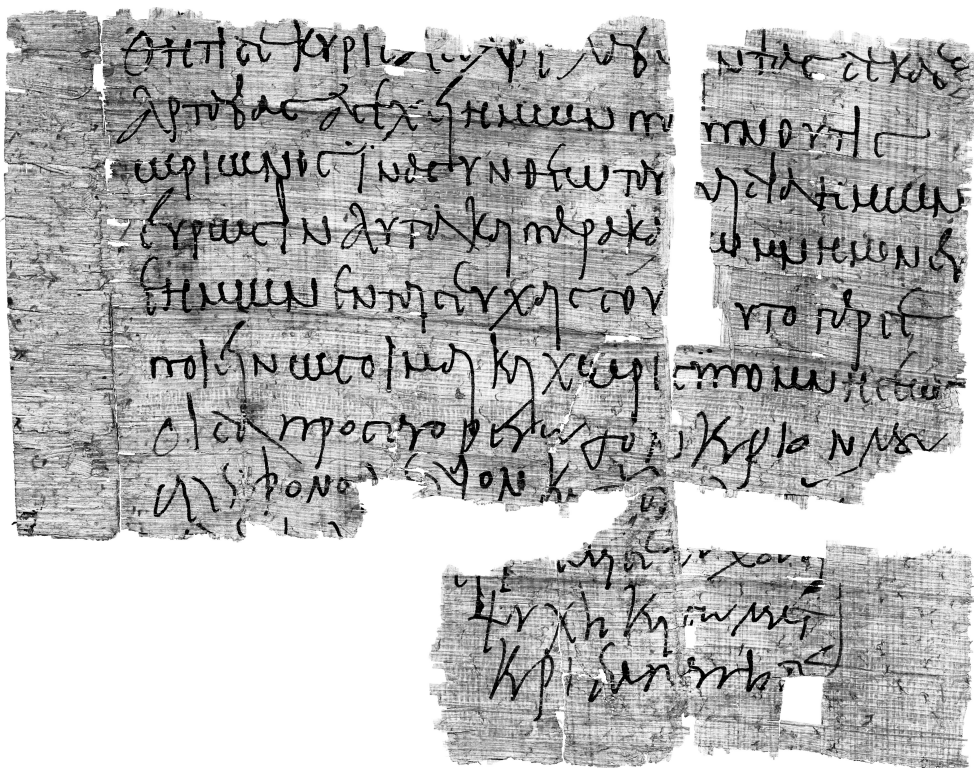


Figure 4.10 *P.Neph. 2*. With the permission of Universitätsbibliothek Trier

P.Neph. 3 (Figure 4.11) is written in a professional and very latinate hand that one might well assign to the fifth century or even the early sixth if one were deprived of context. In line 2, the names of recipient and sender are artistically spaced. The vocabulary is normal, polite business-speak, without elaborate Christian greetings; there are no diacritics, and no *nomina sacra*.

With *P.Neph. 4* (Figure 4.12) we once again have *nomina sacra* and an elaborate and rather stylish prooemium. On the other hand, the hand is a rapid business cursive with no pretense to style, the vocabulary is standard, and the left margin is used for overflow. Line 2 does, however, indent for the greetings.

P.Neph. 5 (Figure 4.13) is yet another distinctive hand, an upright cursive less rapid than *P.Neph. 4*. The writer has taken some care with layout, putting Paulos' name in line 2 to the right and similarly right-siding the concluding greetings. The adjective μεστόν (full) is divided between lines 11 and 12, with the division marked by an apostrophe;

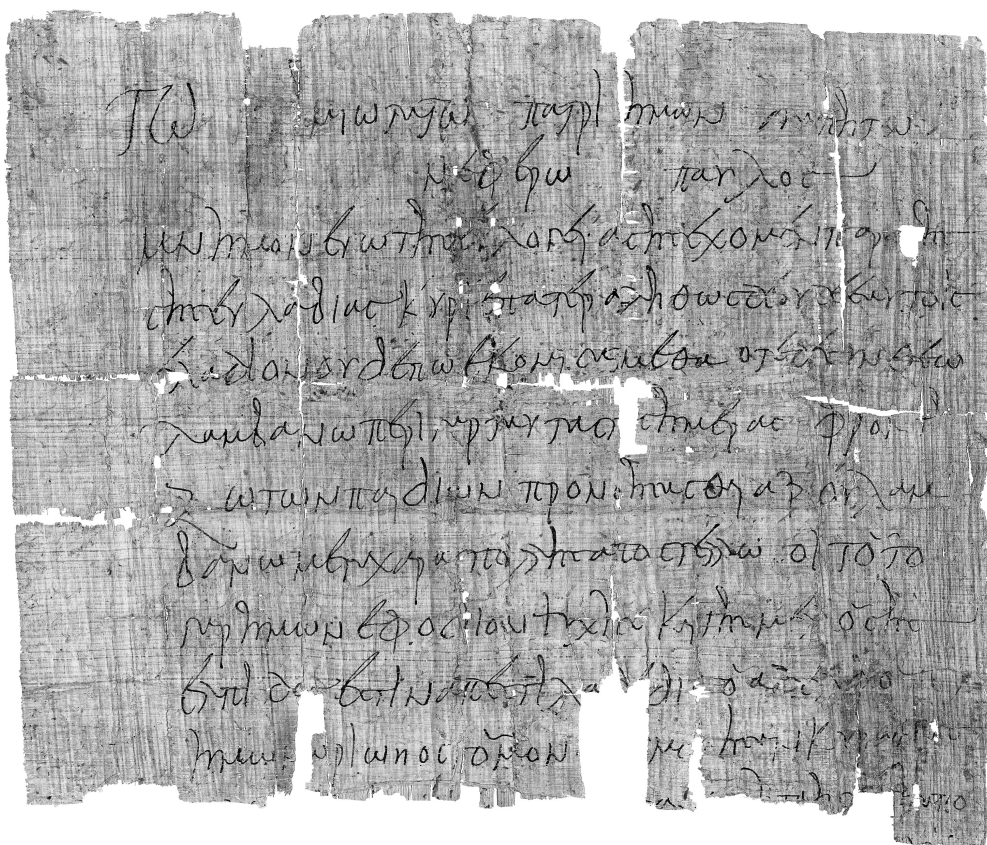


Figure 4.11 *P.Neph.* 3. © Institut für Papyrologie, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

the initially written feminine form with eta is corrected. Perhaps more interesting is that someone has corrected the initial iotacism throughout, turning iota into $\epsilon\iota$ by adding a supralinear epsilon to what was previously iota with diaeresis.

In *P.Neph.* 6 (Figure 4.14) we again find a mixture of traits: a well-made hand with flourishes, especially with epsilon and lambda, and spacing in line 2; crasis occurs once. There is even a rather rare word, $\delta\upsilon\sigma\omega\pi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ (to be importunate). Set against this there are many phonetic spellings, corrections, no diacritics, and text in the left margin.

The remaining texts of the group offer only minor variations on the emerging picture. Some of the writers clearly have the Christian education that allows them to use *nomina sacra* correctly; some employ a few diacritics. The quality of the Greek varies: only a few uncommon words are found. Handwriting ranges from what one would expect of the

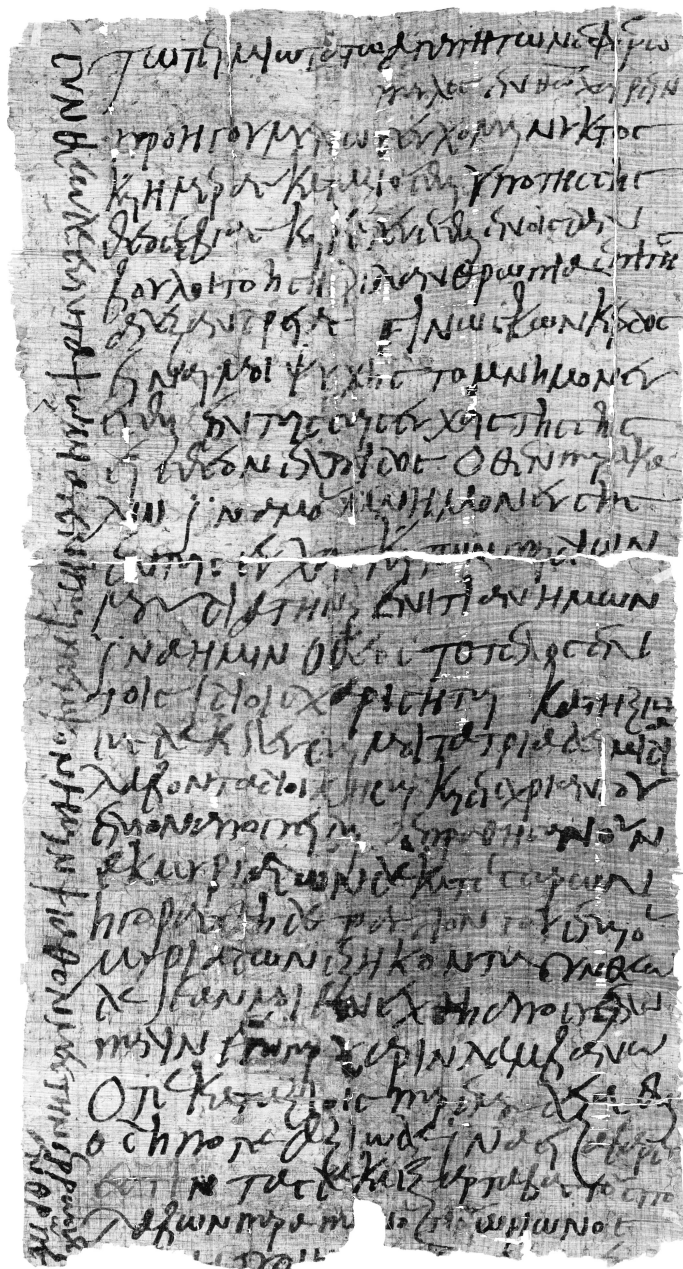


Figure 4.12 P.Neph. 4. © Institut für Papyrologie, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

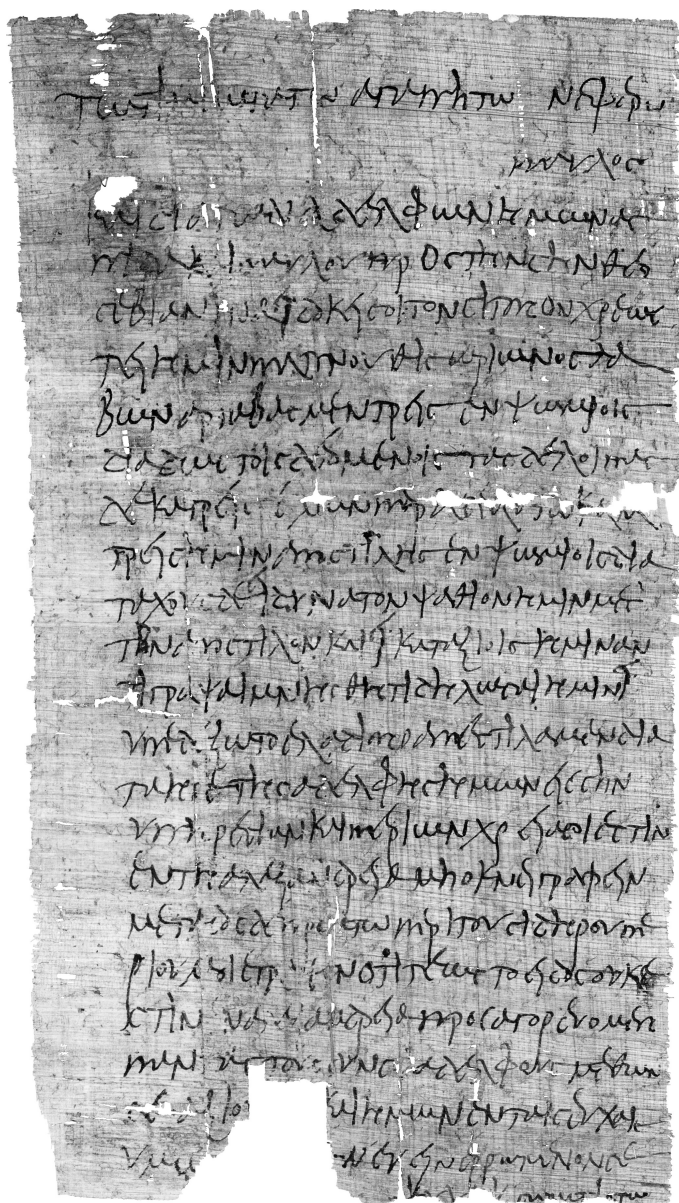


Figure 4.13 P.Neph. 5. © Institut für Papyrologie, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

secretary to a high government official writing competent but style-free business cursive. There are a few attempts at elegance in layout, but they are sometimes subverted by a failure to plan ahead and a consequent need to use the left margin.

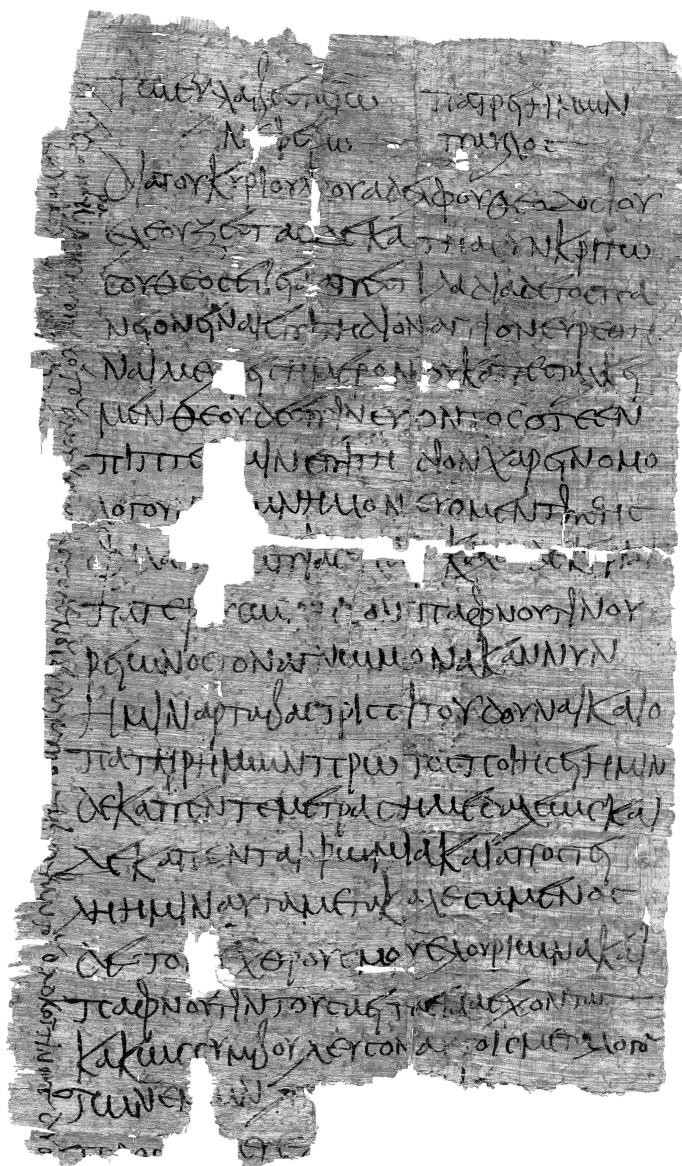


Figure 4.14 *P.Neph. 6*. With the permission of Universitätsbibliothek Trier

As a general judgment, one might say that Paulos' secretaries, and even the monks of the archive, seem to come from a background with more pretensions than the Sansnos dossier, whatever its origin.²⁶ They are more

²⁶ See Wipszycka 2000; Her concern is with the (in her view, little) likelihood that the religious texts in the codices are to be connected with the monastic setting from which the letters come.

likely to have highly professional hands, their vocabularies are somewhat more extensive, and they are more familiar with diacritic marks, even if these have a documentary rather than literary flair. That judgment is confirmed by an analysis of vocabulary and forms by Raffaele Luiselli, who concludes that puristic forms in Paulos' correspondence are fairly rare, and non-puristic ones more common.²⁷ Even the puristic items he cites are not particularly distinctive, and I would not be confident that the writers were at all conscious that these words had a higher status in epistolary diction.

Closely related to the Nepheros dossier, but slightly earlier, are the papyri published in *P.Lond.* VI. *P.Lond.* 1914 is written in a good, even stylish, bureaucratic cursive. As in many of the Nepheros papyri, line 2 is nicely spaced, but the left margin is used. Quite a few diacritics are found: *nomina sacra* abbreviation, apostrophe between double consonants, diaeresis, and one apostrophe between two words. The vocabulary is rather military in nature, rich but prosy and official. There are lots of irregular spellings and some corrections. Overall, the prose is not very graceful. There is one documentary-type abbreviation, for talents. Despite the high volume of diacritics, in sum, the character is much what we have seen with Nepheros.

The other papyri from the dossiers published in this volume have neither published plates nor online images. But I shall describe them briefly.

P.Lond. 1915, a letter to Paieous, is written in a neat, clear cursive, rather bilinear and very competent, but not at all stylish. It originally had neat margins, but a line in the left margin has spoiled the effect. Its diacritics include *nomina sacra*, apostrophes between gamma and kappa in ὄγκον (*og'kon*) and ἀναγκασθῆναι (*anag'kasthênai*), diaeresis, overlining to replace final nu in genitive plural endings, and one place where the writer, or perhaps a corrector, has replaced νκ (*nk*) with γ'κ (*g'k*). It is striking that the back of the papyrus has five additional lines at an orientation turned 90 degrees from the text on the front, and then two lines of problematic Coptic. The address is written in a more stylish fashion and with documentary-style abbreviation of a couple of words. The vocabulary is relatively ambitious, and there is a citation from Titus. The critical apparatus, however, is rich in corrections of spellings and forms: once again, not the harvest one would expect from someone with a grammarian's training.

²⁷ Luiselli 1999: 161–2.

P.Lond. 1917 was already noted by the editor for a number of exceptional features such as the great width of its single-column format, about 46 cm. The top margin slopes down to the right, but the end of line 1 is written above the end of the line. The left margin is preserved; there is no indentation. The hand is good-sized and only semi-cursive, a letter hand with many detached letters. The editor notes that *nomina sacra* appear written in full but overlined, very unusually, suggesting imperfect understanding of the habit. Diaeresis is used. The writer is very experienced and uses an extensive vocabulary in a vivid composition, but he has a very poor command of orthography and conventions. He appears to be far better trained in handwriting than in the Greek language, a characteristic found in some of the other letters of this dossier. Quite possibly we are dealing with dictation.

P.Lond. 1918 is also addressed to Paieous. The hand is a neat, well-made semi-cursive, very much a letter hand. The layout includes neat margins, but no other features of note as far as it is preserved. Diacritics include diaeresis and a *nomen sacrum*. The writer has little grasp of the use of the Greek cases or even gender, and his spelling has typical Egyptian interchanges like delta for tau and kappa for gamma. The language is that of a relatively pedestrian business letter, and in general one would call this a business-style letter with a minimum of ornament and distinctly second-rate Greek.²⁸

P.Lond. 1919, unusually in two columns, has large margins at top, left, and bottom, and a very regular intercolumniation; below the second column, there is a good deal of empty space. The right margin was occupied with line-fillers where needed. The hand, as the editor says, is extremely fluent and in an official vein, a practiced, slanting cursive. The editor describes the style as being “of the usual wordy and empty kind,” but that is a matter of taste. *Nomina sacra* are fairly consistently executed, with one exception. Medial apostrophe appears in one case; there is no diaeresis. Some case-ending problems occur, but there are few corrections. One imagines that the writer is the secretary to a high-ranking cleric.

Even bearing in mind that we are obviously operating at a humbler level than in the case of the elite letter style represented by *P.Herm.* 5, the letters from monastic milieus do not impress by their literary character. Consider this short order in letter form on an ostrakon from Trimithis, *O.Trim.* 2.532 (Figure 4.15), datable to the sixth indiction, almost certainly December 3, 362.

²⁸ In line 6, for the editor’s unknown Πετρίριος read the commonplace Πετρίριος.

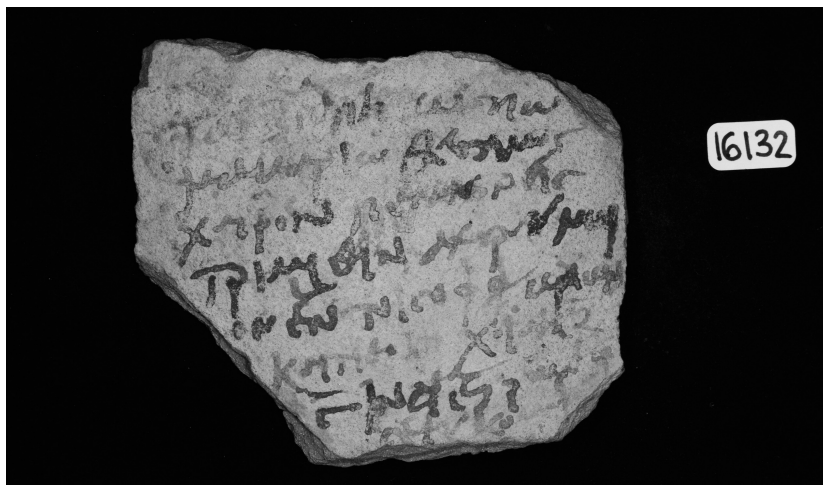


Figure 4.15 O.Trim. 2.532. © Roger Bagnall

Although resolutely documentary in its use of abbreviations in lines 5 and 7, it uses not only *diaeresis* but a rough breathing on $\epsilon\nu$ (*hén*) “one,” to distinguish it from the preposition $\epsilon\nu$ (*en*), “in.” The vocabulary and names indicate strongly that the writer and recipient are Christians, but the writer has evidently had enough literary training in his education that even in a purely business context and using a rapid business cursive, he can show off his knowledge. His Greek is more correct than the average, properly spelled and with endings throughout. He is not the equal of the secretary of the letter from Hermopolis, but he is probably to be seen as a cut above most or even all of the secretaries and perhaps authors of the monastic dossiers we have looked at.

Summary: Analysis of Examples

To summarize and generalize: the hands of these letters range from ordinary semi-cursive letter hands to more rapid cursives that would be at home in business documents, to rapid and even stylish handwritings characteristic of upper bureaucratic milieus. The official hands are not limited to the secretaries of Paulos in the Nepheros archive: they occur even in the Paieous dossier. As I have noted, we can only rarely be sure if a letter is autograph or dictated; but just as we find writing styles strongly marked by book hands produced by secretaries to the Hermopolite educated elite, so the secretaries available to those of monastic circles seem to

have qualities broadly consistent with those the monks themselves display. That is, employer and secretary seem not to come in either case from greatly different backgrounds as far as their script goes.

With layout, although there is some variation, we also find considerable consistency. Most letters were laid out with proper margins; some but not all used indentation or intralinear spacing in the opening greetings; most placed the concluding wishes for health in a narrower block beginning to the right of the center of the lines and running up against the right edge. Writers did not hesitate to invade their carefully established left margins to place a concluding line or two, even though they could perfectly well have placed that on the back. All of these traits are widely found in letters of the period and require no very advanced education.

With diacritics we find again variety within a definable range. Most writers use correct forms of abbreviated *nomina sacra*, for which some Christian element in the training was requisite; but the monk Sansnos did not, one of Paieous' correspondents tried but failed to get it right, and Paulos' secretaries were inconsistent. Most but not all of the writers used diaeresis, mainly inorganic, and a fair number but far from all used medial apostrophe at times to separate double consonants or gamma from a following consonant. Occasionally we find an apostrophe to mark an undeclined word. Abbreviations belonging to documentary practice turn up frequently. Most curious is Serapion in *P.Neph.* 12, who uses the high dot to separate clauses in his series of greetings. This is the single diacritic with some literary flavor in all of these letters – and yet Sarapion also uses a Coptic letter in the middle of a name and employs one Coptic expression. His Greek in general is not very good.

It is perhaps in vocabulary and diction that we find the broadest range, from extremely pedestrian business style to a few letters indulging in rhetoric, generally of a specifically Christian epistolary type; a couple of letters have allusions to New Testament passages. None of this particularly bespeaks a literary education, rather perhaps specific training in writing Christian letters with flowery and complimentary introductions. Although vocabulary is an area to which I have not yet devoted as much detailed study as it would repay, it does not in general seem very puristic or high register.

Overall, there is practically no hint here that any of our writers went on from elementary education to the grammarian where they would have become intimately familiar with Greek prose and poetry, learning to imitate the classic exemplars and acquiring a taste for elegant book hands

while picking up rare words and the theory and practice of accentuation and aspiration, as the elite increasingly did from the third century on. And yet they had an education beyond the elementary. To explore this subject properly would require a monograph complementary to Cribiore's study and perhaps modifying some of its conclusions about some of the school exercises listed there. Included in such a study would also be a consideration of the important codex containing mainly geometry problems, metrological texts, and sample documents, which was seemingly found as part of the same discovery as the codex that included the Gospel of Judas. This mathematical codex,²⁹ which my colleague Alexander Jones and I are editing, belongs in my view to the world of practical or business education. This as yet insufficiently studied alternative (and more common) track to the literary one afforded business managers and tax collectors the training necessary to let them administer Egypt on behalf of the elite, allowing the latter to indulge their passion for rough breathings.

It is to this world that I think the monks and their friends and secretaries should be ascribed. Of course, the monastic movement did have some leaders with the higher education that we find with Antony or Shenoute.³⁰ Presumably many of the identifiable authors we find in Coptic literature did have a literary and even rhetorical education.³¹ And at the other end of the scale, surely there were plenty of monks who had no more than elementary education, even if Wipszycka is right about the drive for widespread literacy in the monastic world. But I would suggest that the core of those who wrote, at least, consisted of this stratum of people who when they came to the fork in the educational road took the direction leading to business management, not to elite leisure activities. This is a stratum located above the median in Egyptian society – they were not peasants – but it is not the stratum from which the governing class came. Some of its members did have literary interests; most, we must imagine, did not. As we can see, many of them had Egyptian as their first language and struggled to produce correct Greek. But they had aspirations.

²⁹ Part is housed in the Cotsen collection of the Princeton University Library, and part belongs to a private collector.

³⁰ See Muehlberger's contribution to this volume.

³¹ See Sheridan's contribution to this volume.

5 | “Excavating the Excavations” of Early Monastic Education

LILLIAN I. LARSEN

Introduction

In reassembling the material and manuscript evidence that derives from the White Monastery in Upper Egypt,¹ Cornelia Römer and Stephen Emmel have framed their work as akin to putting together “a large puzzle.”² Noting the competing economic and academic interests which continue to influence modern preservation and dissemination techniques, they suggest that it is not solely the fragmentary nature of extant source material, but also its selective appropriation and distribution, that has rendered this task challenging.³ Patterns of practice that have left texts and artifacts dismembered and dispersed in museum collections around the world are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in scholarly consideration of the material record of monastic education in Egypt.⁴ However, here,

¹ The artifacts presented in this essay offer a representative sample of broader research, formally begun while I was a graduate student at Columbia University. For much of the past decade, this work has grown more nuanced through ongoing classroom engagement as a faculty member at the University of Redlands. Longstanding research involvement in the Monasticism and Classical Paideia project (MOPAI) at Lund University has complemented day-to-day pedagogical investment. Across this spectrum, thanks are due the Mellon Foundation, the Whiting, the Redlands Faculty Grant committee and the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for sustained and generous financial support. Thanks are likewise due to Raffaella Cribiore, Hal Taussig, and Vincent Wimbush for guiding the early phases of this research and to Roger Bagnall for more recently organizing an opportunity for continued conversation, in a focused workshop hosted by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University (ISAW). Marking a nexus between seemingly disparate worlds, this occasion was something of a homecoming, and a fitting affirmation of the degree to which melding Cribiore’s materially grounded approach, with my own interest in tracing the history of monastic education in Egypt has, in many respects, defined subsequent investments. Early on, the Metropolitan Museum provided access and high-quality images of their subset of Epiphonian school artifacts. This generosity has remained essential to ongoing work. More recently, thanks are due to colleagues at the University of Redlands for affording freedom both within and beyond (and sometimes from) the classroom to continue “excavating” extant excavations. Co-researchers at Lund University – both prior to and within the MOPAI project – have served as a sounding board as well as early and enthusiastic “adopters,” “adapters,” and disseminators of broader re-conceptualizations briefly presented here.

² Emmel and Römer 2008: 8. ³ Emmel and Römer 2008: 8.

⁴ Larsen 2001; 2006a; 2013a; 2013b; 2017.

a dispersed and fragmentary material landscape is imbued with additional layers of interpretive complexity. As even the most critical analyses remain residually informed by assessments that have taken monastic resistance to literate pursuits as a starting point, “excavating the excavations” of extant artifactual evidence offers a persistent reminder of the degree to which “all historical interpretive efforts and their methods and approaches illuminate some things, cast shadows over others, they foreground some things, render into the background certain others.”⁵

An “Absent Chapter”

In their contributions to this volume, Peter Gemeinhardt and Samuel Rubenson explore the philological and conceptual ways that hagiographical emphases of Antony’s “a-literacy” have shaped scholarly assessment of monastic pedagogical investment.⁶ It is arguable, however, that oft-cited counter-images of Arsenius and Evagrius – two exceptional, but “begrudgingly” literate monks – have proved as persuasive.⁷ For example, writing in the mid-twentieth century, Henri Marrou tacitly ellides Antony’s storied a-literacy, with Arsenius’ and Evagrius’ caricatured disavowal of “a good Latin and Greek education.”⁸ Assigning primary historical weight to narrative portrayals of solely these three figures,⁹ Marrou argues that young monks would have received “a kind of training that was ascetic and moral, spiritual rather than intellectual.”¹⁰ Positing constituencies that were

⁵ Wimbush 1997: 1.

⁶ Gemeinhardt (2013 and this volume) traces the trajectory of the *Vita*’s influence as it moves to the West. Rubenson (1995 and this volume) explores the *Vita*’s broader conceptual influence on the reception of Antony’s letters; cf. Brakke 1995. It is arguable that even the most critical analyses remain tacitly informed by a long interpretative trajectory that has drawn sharp geographical distinctions between monastic literate investments in the “East” and in the “West.” While “exceptional” engagement in “bookish” pursuits is premised in discrete loci (or attributed to singular individuals), persistent emphasis on a select subset of hagiographical texts has rendered a broader swathe of the Egyptian monastic landscape, anomalously a- or begrudgingly literate. Even as studies have grown more nuanced, dispersed and/or fragmentary material evidence has combined with historically persuasive hagiography to generate larger-than-life constructs that have proved stubbornly difficult to dismantle; cf. Larsen 2008, 2013b.

⁷ See *AP/G Arsenius 5* = *AP/GS 10.7*; *AP/G Arsenius 6*. While various versions of this encounter remain extant, the most frequently cited depict Arsenius and Evagrius downplaying the intrinsic worth of elite education (cf. Larsen 2001, 2006a; 2013a; 2013b). Rydell Johnsen (2013 and this volume) explores the use of commensurate language in ancient philosophical circles.

⁸ *AP/G Arsenius 6* (Ward); cf. Marrou 1956: 330–3; Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 1.

⁹ Stefaniw’s post-colonial critique, this volume, offers a useful entry point for reassessing the cultural and social presuppositions that form the basis of Marrou’s constructs.

¹⁰ Marrou 1956: 330.

"less concerned with learning than... forgetting... poetry and secular knowledge,"¹¹ he names resistance to literate pursuits "one of the most characteristic features of Eastern monasticism."¹²

Some fifty years hence, an anthology aimed at rethinking Marrou's "totalizing narrative"¹³ likewise includes an essay that purports to reassess the question of monastic education.¹⁴ Its author, at once, echoes and refines Marrou's focus, but again uses only caricatured depictions of Antony, Evagrius, and Arsenius as primary evidence for historical reanalysis.¹⁵ Here, Evagrius is designated "one of the most original thinkers and radical teachers in the tradition."¹⁶ His instruction is astutely identified as "a kind of absent chapter" in the history of education.¹⁷ Left unexamined, however, is Marrou's framing of such investment as exceptional.¹⁸ Rather than representing one point on a plausible spectrum of monastic literacy, Evagrius is pictured "pitted against the fathers," a well-educated, urban intellectual "facing off" with "desert wisdom."¹⁹

Given the emphasis placed on these relatively singular literary portrayals, it is interesting that more measured discussion of sustained pedagogical engagement surfaces in even the earliest refractions of monastic life. Arguably the most detailed description is that articulated in a letter penned by Jerome, and directed to Laeta, a wealthy Roman householder.²⁰ Sent from an emergent establishment in Palestine, this missive addresses the education of Laeta's young daughter, Paula. It simultaneously offers something of an epistolary apologetic for the merits of a "monastic education."

¹¹ Marrou 1956: 330; cf. Larsen 2013a.

¹² Marrou 1956: 333; In introducing discussion of "The Monastic School in the East" Marrou writes, "St. Antony, the great founder of monasticism, was an illiterate Coptic peasant who was able to get on quite well without any books, as he soon proved to any philosophers who came and argued with him. This was a fundamental feature of Eastern monasticism and it was never lost: these desert people were less concerned with learning than with forgetting the poetry and secular knowledge they had picked up in the schools before conversion. Monasticism brought back into the Christian tradition the virtues of the simple and unlettered, as against the intellectual pride fostered by the old culture, which, as is clear from the Gnostics and the Alexandrians, was in the third century threatening to destroy the original simplicity of the Gospels" (330); cf. Larsen 2013a: 59–62, echoed by Rubenson, this volume. See also Rydell Johnsén, this volume.

¹³ Too 2001: 1–21. ¹⁴ Rappe 2001: 405–32; cf. Marrou 1956: 314–50.

¹⁵ Rappe 2001: 421–30. ¹⁶ Rappe 2001: 423. ¹⁷ Rappe 2001: 430.

¹⁸ While to a greater or lesser degree, both Marrou and Rappe mistake hagiography for history, Westergren (2012 and this volume) usefully contextualizes the "language of literacy" within a broader linguistic and cultural frame.

¹⁹ Rappe 2001: 422; cf. Arthur Urbano 2013 and this volume for a richly nuanced counter-reading of such traditional categories of "contest."

²⁰ Jerome, *Ep.* 107 (Wright 1933: 338–71).

Jerome suggests that from her earliest interactions, young Paula's "tongue . . . be imbued with the sweet music of the Psalms."²¹ To aid in learning the alphabet, he recommends that "a set of letters [be] made. . . of boxwood or of ivory," so that Paula may learn to call each by its proper name. In order to know them by sight as well as by sound, he advises that she should "not only [be made to] grasp the right order of the letters and remember their names in a simple song, but also frequently upset their order and mix the last letters with the middle ones, the middle with the first."²²

Reworking well-attested pedagogical sequences, as Paula moves from letters and syllables to words and sentences, Jerome suggests that the terms she uses should not be assigned haphazardly, but "chosen and arranged on purpose." To aid in training both speech and memory, he advises that word lists include "the names of the prophets and the apostles, and the whole list of patriarchs from Adam downward, as [given by] Matthew and Luke."²³ In work with sentences and short passages, Jerome recommends that, along with the Psalms, lines be drawn from "rules of life [found in] the proverbs of Solomon."²⁴ Rather than "silks or gems," he suggests that Paula's treasures should be "manuscripts of the holy scriptures." Even here, however, she should "think less of gilding . . . Babylonian parchment, and arabesque patterns, than of correct . . . and accurate [punctuation]."²⁵

While Jerome's commendations might be attributed to more general Christianization of the established curriculum, the final clause in his letter is significant. Having laid out his revised pedagogical sequences, Jerome makes what is arguably his broader motive clear. Emphasizing the difficulties implicit in Laeta's tackling the schooling of a child amidst the duties of running a busy Roman household, he urges that young Paula be sent to

²¹ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 (Wright 1933: 344–5): . . . *adhuc tenera lingua psalmis dulcibus inbuatur.*

²² Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 (Wright 1933: 344–7): *Fiant ei litterae uel buxae uel eburneae et suis nominibus appellentur . . . et non solum ordinem teneat litterarum, ut memoria nominum in canticum transeat, sed ipse inter se crebro ordo turbetur et mediis ultima, primis media misceantur ut eas non sonu tantum, sed et uisu nouerit; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.25.*

²³ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 (Wright 1933: 346–7): *Ipsa nomina, per quae consuescet uerba contexere, non sint fortuita, sed certa et coaceruata de industria, prophetarum uidelicet atque apostolorum, et omnis ab Adam patriarcharum series de Matheo Lucaque descendat, ut, dum aliud agit, futurae memoriae praeparetur; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.30–5.*

²⁴ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.12 (Wright 1933: 364–5): *Discat primum Psalterium . . . et in Prouerbiis Salomonis erudiatur ad uitam.*

²⁵ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.12 (Wright 1933: 364–5): *Pro gemmis aut serico diuinos codices amet, in quibus auri et pellis Babyloniae uermiculata pictura, sed ad fidem placeat emendata et erudita distinctio.*

Bethlehem, to be "reared in a monastery."²⁶ Within an establishment founded and funded by the child's grandmother – the elder Paula – Jerome offers his own services as tutor. As young Paula's ideal instructor, a man of "approved years, life, and learning," he advertises his proposed role as akin to that of Aristotle's teaching Alexander "his first letters."²⁷

In Marrou's 1956 *History*, Jerome's monastic curriculum – like Evagrius' erudition – is named anomalous. It is not mentioned at all in Sara Rappe's later reassessment.²⁸ However, a survey of emergent source material suggests that the explicit role Jerome assigns monastic pedagogical investment was not unique. His sequences find echo in descriptive accounts from Cappadocia to Egypt, Antioch to Palestine.²⁹ In turn, as he and his monastic contemporaries discuss pedagogical protocol appropriate for "children . . . [of] the . . . community," they are working with well-established models.³⁰ Albeit provisionally privileging an alternate body of authoritative content, prescribed elementary forms parallel those widely documented in the broader Mediterranean milieu. Reworked to address a new context, monastic grammatical strategies remain consonant with traditional structures that guided ancient education from the Hellenistic era through the Byzantine period, and beyond.³¹ As established forms, infused with alternate content register overt continuity, they render

²⁶ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.13 (Wright 1933: 366–7): *Nutriatur in monasterio. . .*

²⁷ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 (Wright 1933: 346–9): *Magister probae aetatis et uitae atque eruditionis est eligendus nec, puto, erubescit doctus uir id facere uel in propinqua uel in nobili uirgine, quod Aristoteles fecit in Philippi filio, ut ipse librariorum uilitate initia ei traderet litterarum.* Jerome concludes his letter with an offer to serve as young Paula's "tutor" and "foster-father." Carrying her on his shoulders, he will "train her stammering lips . . . tak[ing] more pride in [his] task than . . . the worldly philosopher; for . . . [rather than] teaching a Macedonian king, destined to die by poison in Babylon, [he will instruct] the handmaid and bride of Christ who one day [will] be presented to the heavenly throne"; *Ipse, si Paulam miseris, balbutientia senex uerba formabo multo gloriosior mundi philosopho, qui non regem Macedonum Babylonio periturum ueneno, sed ancillam et sponsam Christi erudiam regnis caelestibus offerendam* (Jerome, *Ep.* 107.13; Wright 1933: 368–71).

²⁸ See further discussion in Larsen 2013a: 62–7; 2017.

²⁹ Others have downplayed the monastic significance of the structures Jerome outlines by virtue of his elite Roman audience. However, there is little evidence to support the premise that Jerome's curriculum should be named exceptional. In fact, within both a monastic and broader frame, the sequences Jerome outlines parallel investment in literate pursuits across broad swathes of both the "East" and the "West"; cf. Criboire 1996, 2001; Morgan 1998; Larsen 2006a; 2013a; 2017.

³⁰ Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 15; Jerome, *Ep.* 107; Pachomius, *Praec.* 138–9; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.

³¹ Criboire (1996 and 2001) outlines and depicts established sequences in close detail; cf. Morgan 1998.

scholarly constructs that have deemed monastic pedagogical registers “exceptional,” something of a historical curiosity.

That hagiographical caricature has played a determinative role in reading the literary record of monastic education is richly documented in studies undertaken by the scholars included in this volume.³² The degree to which derivative influence has shaped assessment of the monastic material record has received less attention.³³ However, “excavating the excavation” of three school artifacts of contested significance renders patent a number of persistent interpretive patterns. These are manifested in scholarly trajectories that have routinely named monastic school evidence *either* pedagogical *or* monastic. Nonetheless, re-examined in light of Jerome and his contemporaries’ descriptive accounts of classroom practice, each artifact more readily fits *both* designations. Countering trajectories still shaped by competing economic and academic interests, each invites assigning interpretive weight to emergent norms that remain adoptive *and* adaptive in character. Likewise, each suggests that if the absent chapter that is monastic education is finally to be written, it must involve not only critical reassessment of literary source material, but also systematic “excavation” of the interpretive layers that have governed “identification,” “collection,” and “categorization” within the excavational record itself.

Identification

The determinative influence of disparate interpretive emphases is well illustrated in recent consideration of a Late Antique syllabary, preserved *in situ* at Beni Hasan, in Upper Egypt. In her rich discussion of literate education in Graeco-Roman Egypt, Raffaella Cribiore identifies the syllabus as plausibly marking the locus of an ancient school.³⁴ She likewise describes the types of pedagogical activities that would have taken place in “the cool private spaces provided by [this] pharaonic tomb.”³⁵ Cribiore notes that the syllabary, “written in red letters occupied an extensive space on one of the walls,” otherwise covered in painted scenes.³⁶ Referencing

³² See the editors’ introduction for more detailed discussion.

³³ In reading “against the grain,” Roger Bagnall’s early re-assessment of the monastic material record remains seminal (Bagnall 1993); James Goehring’s sustained deployment of a “hermeneutics of suspicion” has proved as incisive (cf. Goehring 1993; 2005).

³⁴ Cribiore 2001: 23–5; cf. Champollion 1889: 459–60, no. 10. ³⁵ Cribiore 2001: 23.

³⁶ Cribiore 2001: 23.

“biliteral and triliteral combinations of consonants and vowels in seven long rows,” she suggests that “[t]his particular syllabary was like a permanent model that provided a suitable decoration to a ‘room for education.’”³⁷ Cribiore observes that in such settings, “syllabaries were fundamental to teaching reading,” and were essential elements in a process aimed at training students to “pronounc[e] . . . aloud the syllabic combinations . . . inscribed by teachers on models.”³⁸ While Cribiore does not identify this particular pedagogical locus as monastic, she notes in passing that the network of tombs where the syllabary is located was later repurposed by Egyptian monks. She also premises that some level of educational investment would have plausibly served as a requisite element of emergent monastic life.³⁹

In a less than sympathetic assessment of Cribiore’s work, monastic historian Scott Bucking reverses these emphases.⁴⁰ Accentuating a literary tradition that depicts “such tombs [as] the favored habitation spaces of Christian monks,” Bucking suggests that “it is probably within this [monastic] context that the production of the syllabary at Beni Hasan should be viewed.”⁴¹ While Bucking initially entertains the possibility that this template of letter combinations might “perhaps [be connected] with some kind of formal education[al] activity among the resident monks,”⁴² his attention remains fixed on whether such education would have involved children or adults,⁴³ “scribes” or “scholars.”⁴⁴ He additionally alludes to magical or decorative functions, suggesting that pedagogical purpose “is by no means the only way to interpret such texts.”⁴⁵

Even without further investigation, it is clear that Cribiore and Bucking have read the same material evidence in light of different disciplinary predispositions. However, in “excavating the excavations” of this inscription, closer scrutiny elucidates supplementary layers that invite more detailed examination. First, it appears that each of these scholarly reassessments references a different published transcript of

³⁷ Cribiore 2001: 23–4.

³⁸ Cribiore 2001: 23–4; As she rehearses a line of the syllabary, Cribiore mimics the “voices of children learning Greek syllables—*ba-be-bi-bo-* and so on.”

³⁹ Cribiore 2001: 24–5. ⁴⁰ Bucking 2007: 21–47; cf. Newberry 1893: II 76–7, pl. XXV.

⁴¹ Bucking 2007: 40. ⁴² Bucking 2007: 40.

⁴³ Bucking 2007: 36–40; cf. Giorda 2012 and 2017 for an alternate reading of complementary evidence.

⁴⁴ Bucking 2007: 40–4; cf. Haines-Eitzen 2000, and Kotsifou 2007, as well as this volume’s essays by Bagnall, Maravela, Lundhaug and Jenott, for a richer and more dispersed range of views on questions related to monastic scribal practice.

⁴⁵ Bucking 2007: 40.

the syllabary. Cribiore cites J. F. Champollion's handwritten survey of the monuments of Egypt and Nubia, published in 1889.⁴⁶ Bucking appears to be reading an alternate appraisal of the same site, published by Percy Newberry in 1893.⁴⁷

Champollion's copy of a carefully laid-out syllabary is neatly penned in clear, nineteenth-century cursive (Figure 5.1).⁴⁸ As described by Cribiore, this syllabary is comprised of discrete sections of "bilateral and trilateral combinations." Following established convention, the sectors are organized as consonant-vowel combinations, sequenced in alphabetical order, "in seven long rows."⁴⁹

Newberry's report also includes transcription of the syllabary (Figure 5.2).⁵⁰ However, in contrast to Champollion's carefully proportioned columns and rows, the syllabary's content is rendered in a rough uneven hand. Simultaneously, despite its haphazard appearance, Newberry's transcription is more detailed – faithfully reproducing sectors of letters and syllables only loosely referenced in Champollion's earlier publication. For example, Champollion describes a tripartite introductory section of the syllabary as "composed of letters of the alphabet, vowels and consonants mixed *sans ordre*."⁵¹ Newberry, in turn, spells out these sequences. Additionally, although Champollion names the inclusion of six Coptic letters among the syllabary's Greek combinations [Ϡ (*shai*), ϣ (*fai*), ϡ (*horeh*), ϣ (*qof*), ϡ (*djanja*), † (*ti*)],⁵² Newberry positions this line of characters at the point where letters appear in the inscription (Figure 5.2.Ee).⁵³

The aesthetic effect of the two refractions is disparate in both predictable and provocative ways. Champollion's careful columns register a "garden variety" syllabary consisting of Greek alphabetic combinations. By virtue of the clear hand in which the letters are transcribed, included content makes the syllabary's familiar forms readily legible. Close resemblance to similarly

⁴⁶ Champollion 1889: 459–60; cf. Cribiore 2001: 23–4.

⁴⁷ Newberry 1893: II 76–7, pl. XXV; cf. Bucking 2007: 39–40. ⁴⁸ Champollion 1889: 459–60.

⁴⁹ Cribiore 2001: 23. ⁵⁰ Newberry 1893: II 76–7, pl. XXV. ⁵¹ Champollion 1889: 459.

⁵² Champollion 1889: 459.

⁵³ Newberry 1893: II 76–7, pl. XXV; Bucking also calls attention to the syllabary's inclusion of Coptic combinations "in the tenth column of the third row" (40). This identification, however, appears less than secure. While Coptic letters do appear elsewhere in the syllabary, by virtue of form, the combinations Bucking references seem to be comprised of an expected *zeta* (ζ) that has been replaced by a somewhat similarly shaped *horeh* (ϡ) in what remains, sequentially, a series of Greek syllables. Thus, by virtue of form: βαζ (*bah*), βεζ (*beh*), βηζ (*bêh*), βιζ (*bih*), βοζ (*boh*), βυζ (*byh*), βωζ (*bôh*), should arguably be read: βαζ (*baz*), βεζ (*bez*), βηζ (*bêz*), βιζ (*biz*), βοζ (*boz*), βυζ (*byz*), βωζ (*bôz*). The latter, corrected forms align with those given for this column in Monika Hasitzka's transcription. They likewise match a counterpart in the fourth section of the syllabary (1990: 56–7, no. 74); cf. Bucking 2007: 40, n. 72.

BENI HASAN.

TOMB No. 23.

PLATE XXV.

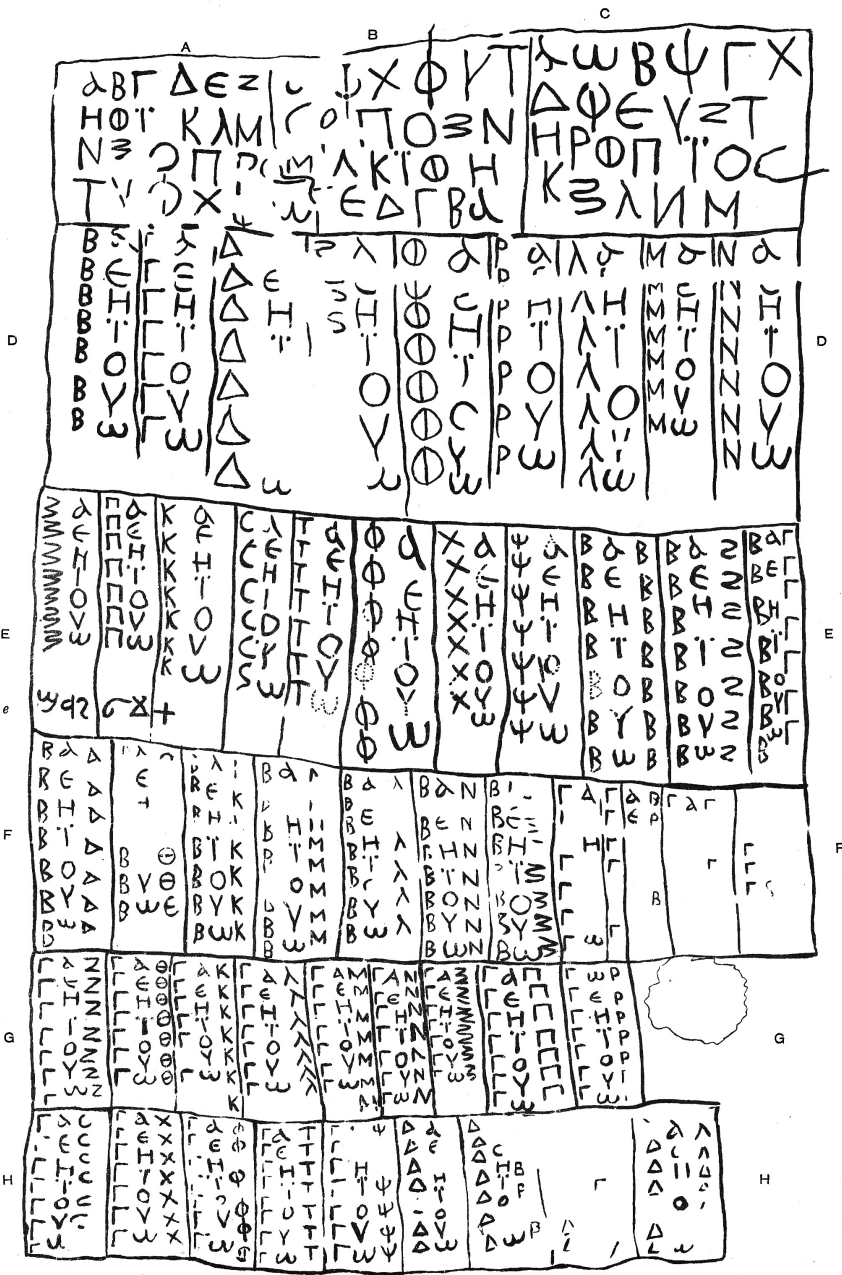


Figure 5.2 Newberry's transcription of the Beni Hasan Syllabary (1893)

The somewhat erratic appearance of Newberry’s transcript arguably disguises the syllabary’s familiar form. However, this more detailed record simultaneously reaffirms the syllabary’s pedagogical purpose. As “spelled out” by Newberry, the syllabary is introduced not by letters “*sans ordre*,”⁵⁵ but by a series of three clearly sequenced alphabets. In the first, the letters appear in conventional order; in the second, their order is reversed. In the third, the letters follow a pattern that brings to mind the “mixed” practice commended by Jerome (and Quintilian). Resultant combinations are formed by pairing the first letter of the alphabet with the last, the second with the second to last, *et cetera*: thus α (*alpha*) ω (*omega*), β (*beta*) ψ (*psi*), γ (*gamma*) χ (*chi*), through μ (*mu*) ν (*nu*).⁵⁶

The six additional Coptic consonants included in the syllabary also follow conventional sequencing. While hardly integral to the syllabary’s overall structure, their inclusion seems less than unusual. In fact, it might be more surprising to find Coptic characters wholly absent from a fifth-sixth-century school text, provenanced to central Egypt. Despite its irregular appearance, both form and content affirm assigning the syllabary pedagogical purpose.

Situating the syllabary within its physical context lends further nuance to this assessment. Viewed *in situ*, the inscription does not align neatly with



Figure 5.3 Beni Hasan Syllabary *in situ* (Detail). Photo: Hugo Lundhaug

⁵⁵ Champollion 1889: 459. ⁵⁶ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.25; cf. Larsen 2017.



Figure 5.4 Beni Hasan Syllabary *in situ* (Full). Photo: Hugo Lundhaug

either Cribiore's or Bucking's descriptions. A close-up photograph of a discrete portion of the syllabary confirms what Champollion reproduces as a practiced, regular hand (Figure 5.3).⁵⁷ Viewed in its entirety, however, the syllabary's somewhat irregular character – captured in Newberry's slightly

⁵⁷ Thanks to Hugo Lundhaug for photographing patterns identified in my prior work, during a joint research visit to this site.

later publication – is as apparent (Figure 5.4). This is partly due to the position of the syllabary relative to the wall on which it remains faintly visible. As suggested by Cribiore, it is clear that the inscription consists of elements that could easily constitute "a permanent model." Although the syllabary's physical appearance might more readily be named functional than decorative, this does little to diminish its designation in marking a locus that remains suitable as a "room for education."⁵⁸

Bucking's assignation of monastic provenance, adds further weight to such analysis. Newberry's publication of the site makes particular note of the Greek and Coptic graffiti interspersed throughout the tomb complex.⁵⁹ As transcribed, the tomb locus of the syllabary is home to visible concentrations of this content. While portions are only partially preserved, of particular interest are dispersed clusters of Biblical names (cf. cover image). For example, one of the most legible includes: ΝΩΞ[ε] (Noah), ΑΒΡΑΞΑΜ (Abraham), Ι[ΣΑ]Κ (Isaac), [ΙΑΚΩ]Β (Jacob), ΙΩΗΦ (Joseph) . . . ΙΩΩΑΝΝΗC (John), ΔΑΝΙΗΛ (Daniel), ΑΝΑΝΙΑC (Ananias), ΜΙCΑ[ΗΛ] (Michael), ΑΖ[Δ]ΡΙΑC (Azarias).⁶⁰ Elsewhere, the term ΑΠΑ (father) is repeated ten times.⁶¹ Presumably aimed at acquiring "knowledge which would need [extra] time for itself later on,"⁶² the concentrated character of such sequences brings to mind Jerome's commendation that word lists comprise "the prophets . . . the apostles . . . [and] the . . . patriarchs from Adam downwards."⁶³ Conjoined with the syllabary, and its introductory alphabets, each suggests pedagogical purpose – even as use of Biblical terms invites further consideration of the types of subject matter one might expect to encounter in monastic classroom settings.⁶⁴

"Excavation" Report

If one privileges complementary models over either-or binaries, assigning the Beni Hasan Syllabary both monastic and educational purpose is decidedly well grounded.⁶⁵ Examined in conversation with evidence preserved elsewhere in the tomb, the form and content of previously unidentified

⁵⁸ Cf. Cribiore 2001: 23–4. ⁵⁹ Newberry 1893: II 65–8. ⁶⁰ Newberry 1893: II 68, no. 75.

⁶¹ Newberry 1893: II 67, no. 69. ⁶² Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.35 (Russell 2001: 80–1).

⁶³ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 (Wright 1933: 346–7).

⁶⁴ See Stefaniw, this volume, for discussion of more specific classroom transcripts.

⁶⁵ Granting this frame, Pachomius' instruction that each newly entering monk should go at the first, third and sixth hour "to someone who can teach . . . and learn very studiously with all gratitude . . . the fundamentals of a syllable, the verbs and nouns [that have been] written for him," takes on new valence (*Praec.* 139 [Vielleux 1981: II 166]). Similarly evocative is Basil's

elements – particularly those detailed in Newberry’s transcription – lend added support to Cribiore’s firm identification of the space as pedagogical. Bucking’s classification of the site as monastic appears to be as well supported. In fact, in “excavating” diverse construals of this excavation, as form and content are placed in conversation with text and context, seemingly skeletal remains produce an archaeological register that is decidedly rich. While absolute conclusions remain elusive – for example, whether the users were adults or children – a monastic presence appears not only possible, but eminently probable. Defining details of content and form, text and context, that can be used in further “identification,” available evidence also signals a pedagogical locus where rehearsing syllables, alphabets, and words remains the most plausible of possible purposes for the material in question. Simultaneously, the predispositions that have shaped each interpretive layer underscore the degree to which tiered choices continue to efface and/or elucidate the character of emergent investment. In “excavating the excavations” of established practice, the details that dictate which content is “identified” as monastic and/or pedagogical suggest that what one is looking for may often predetermine what one finds, and/or chooses to report.⁶⁶

Collection

The competing emphases that have influenced “identification” of the Beni Hasan Syllabary are more subtly manifested in the interpretive choices which have shaped “collection” of a second school text. This is preserved on the *recto* face of a fragmented ostrakon, whose various sherds remain dispersed in “museum collections around the world.”⁶⁷ As reconstructed, the exercise consists of carefully formed letters, sequenced into rows of nine characters. The first and final four letters in each row are repeated *betas*. Each paired set is separated by an alphabetically sequenced central character, thus: $\text{BBBB}\Delta\text{BBBB}$ (BBBBABBB) / BBBBBBBB (BBBBBBBB) / $\text{BBBB}\Gamma\text{BBBB}$ (BBBBGBBB) / $\text{BBBB}\Delta\text{BBBB}$ (BBBBDBBB).⁶⁸

One sector of the fragmented ostrakon’s sherds is owned by the British Museum in London (Figure 5.5). Its content was first published in H. R. Hall’s turn of the century *Coptic and Greek Texts of the Christian Period in*

suggestion that classrooms be situated at some distance from the houses of the monks, so the community not be disturbed by children reciting their lessons (Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 15).

⁶⁶ The present reanalysis is, of course, no exception. ⁶⁷ Emmel and Römer 2008: 8.

⁶⁸ O.MMA 14.1.188; O.BM 19082, 18816, 18798, 18972; cf. Larsen 2013b; 2017.

the British Museum.⁶⁹ A second set is owned by the Metropolitan Museum in New York City (Figure 5.6). These fragments are published in Crum, Winlock and White's detailed report of the excavations undertaken at the Monastery of Epiphanius in Thebes.⁷⁰

Hall's catalogue assigns the British Museum sherds a pedagogical function.⁷¹ Explicitly identified as school related, the pieces are included in a section of the catalogue entitled "*abecedaria*." The provenance of the fragments, however, is left unidentified. As the sherds are iteratively republished in a series of subsequent catalogues, their "school" character and unidentified provenance remain distinctive. More than half a century after Hall's publication, the fragments – of unidentified provenance – are included in Giorgio Zlateo's "*Papiri scolastici*" (1961).⁷² Five years later they appeared in R. A. Pack's *Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Roman Egypt* (1965).⁷³ Three decades hence, they are numbered among the entries in Debut's "*Les documents scolaires*" (1986).⁷⁴ In 1990, included content receives brief mention as an example of "*einzelne Buchstaben*" (individual letters) in Monika Hasitzka's publication of Coptic pedagogical texts.⁷⁵ In 1996, the sherds – with their now extensive bibliographic lineage – are catalogued in Raffaella Cribiore's comprehensive collection of Graeco-Roman school artifacts.⁷⁶ Cribiore's publication also includes a photographic image of the reassembled fragments. They are again firmly identified as "school related," but the provenance of the sherds remains stubbornly "unknown."⁷⁷

By virtue of being published in Winlock, Crum and White's Epiphanius excavation report, for almost a century the Metropolitan fragments of the same artifact (and exercise) have been assigned monastic provenance.⁷⁸ In a striking shift, however, although this early catalogue is one of few to include a category explicitly devoted to Greek "School Pieces,"⁷⁹ here the fragmented sherds are not so identified. While

⁶⁹ Hall 1905: 36, pl. 29, n. 2; O.BM 19082, 18816, 18798, 18972.

⁷⁰ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 298, n. 576 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 576); O.MMA 14.1.188; see Maravela, this volume, for additional discussion of the Epiphanius excavation; cf. Larsen 2006a, 66–73.

⁷¹ Hall 1905: 36, pl. 29, n. 2. ⁷² Zlateo 1961: 160–235, ns. 34, 99.

⁷³ Pack 1965: 139, n. 2695. ⁷⁴ Debut 1986: 251–78, n. 7. ⁷⁵ Hasitzka 1990: 42, n. 39.

⁷⁶ Cribiore 1996: 181–2, n. 34, pl. I. ⁷⁷ Cribiore 1996: 181, n. 34.

⁷⁸ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 298, n. 576.

⁷⁹ Crum, *et al.* 1926: II 135–6 and 320–2, ns. 611–20 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 611–20); of these, the first four entries (ns. 611–14) consist of variously configured lines from the *Iliad* (O.MMA 14.1.140, 14.1.139, *et al.*); the fifth (no. 615) is an ostrakon that contains a selection of lines drawn from the *Sentences of Menander* (O.MMA 14.1.210); the sixth (no. 616) is a wooden tablet inscribed with a χαλινός (*chalinos*), a "verse containing every letter of the Greek alphabet" (O.MMA 14.1.219); the seventh (no. 617), another wooden tablet, contains a list of months (T.MMA 14.1.13); the eighth (no. 618),

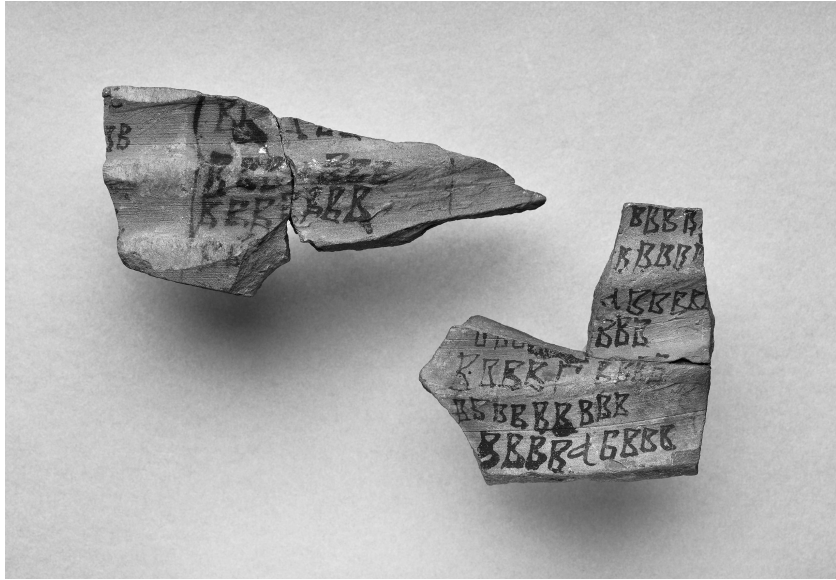


Figure 5.5 British Museum ‘Abecedary’ (O.BM 19082 *et al.*). © The Trustees of the British Museum

the ostracon’s lettered rows might be read as either Greek or Coptic, in iterative publication, the unprovenanced British Museum fragments are consistently identified as Greek.⁸⁰ Crum, Winlock, and White (Crum, *et al.* 1926), in contrast, include the Metropolitan fragments among their catalogue’s Coptic artifacts. By linguistic distinction, this precludes their being listed with the catalogue’s Greek “school pieces,” for which there exists no Coptic pedagogical counterpart. Though the editors note that the alphabetic sequences of this fragmented ostracon appear to be more than a “mere [scribal] copying exercise,”⁸¹ they are included in a list of “Miscellaneous” artifacts.⁸² Because the catalogue has no category that can accommodate a

the days of the week in Christian and “planetary” nomenclature (O.MMA 14.1.214); the ninth (no. 619) is a list of Greek ordinals, from one to eighteen (Cairo 44674.171); the tenth (no. 620), a Greek alphabet, which appears to double as a scribal exercise, followed by the phrase “monks most beloved of God” (θεοφιλέστατοι μοναχοί [*theophilestatoi monachoi*]; O.MMA 12.180.107). A number of these pieces are derivatively discussed by Maravela, this volume. Thanks to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which in the spring of 2006 provided the services of a photographer, and a set of high-quality images for closer analysis. Warm thanks are likewise due to Raffaella Cribiore, who introduced me to the Epiphany site, through affording access to Columbia’s collection of artifacts.; cf. Larsen 2006a; 2013a; 2013b, 2017.

⁸⁰ Inclusion of Coptic school texts in Hasitzka’s 1990 catalogue marks a noteworthy exception.

⁸¹ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 298, n. 576.

⁸² Crum *et al.* 1926: II 117 and 298, ns. 573–7 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 573–7).

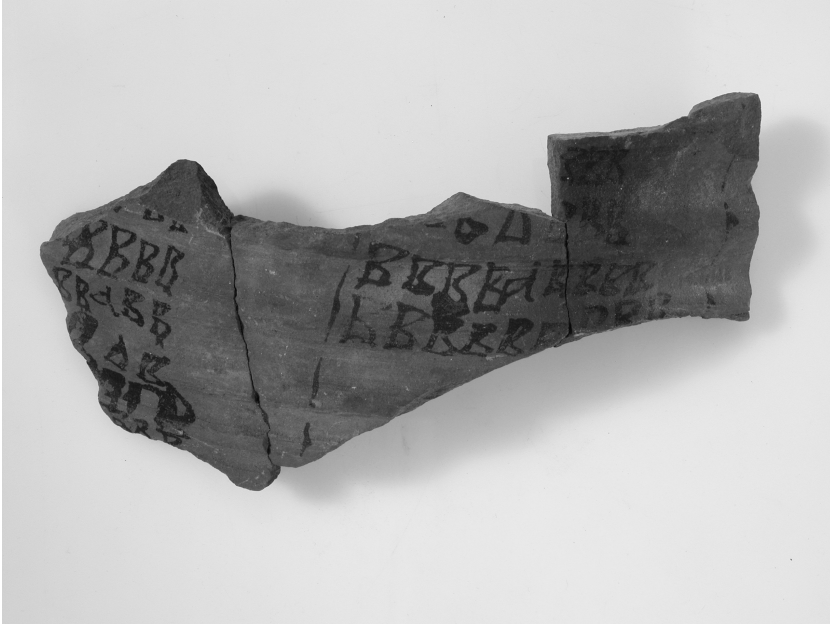


Figure 5.6 Metropolitan "Miscellaneous" Fragment (*O.MMA. 14.1.188*). The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1914, 14.1.188). Photo: Art Resource, NY. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Coptic school text, even as the sherds owned by the Metropolitan Museum regain their monastic provenance, they lose their pedagogical character. Albeit more than a "scribal exercise," these "Miscellaneous" fragments are preserved as less than a "School Piece." The degree to which both monastic provenance and linguistic designation have played a determinative role in "identification" and "collection" of the artifact's respective sherds remains a question.

"Excavation" Report

Once it is "collected" and reassembled, "identifying" this piece as school related is relatively straightforward. Whether designated Greek or Coptic, generally pedagogical or more explicitly monastic, both form and content match well-documented exercises associated with broader classroom practice. While these are most clearly delineated in literary descriptions that derive from a Graeco-Roman frame, it is not difficult to imagine that the sequences Jerome commends for young virgins and monks register similar

protocol.⁸³ Reprovenanced to a monastic milieu and rescued from its “Miscellaneous” categorization, this school text’s iterated alphabetic permutations appear complementary to those which introduce the Beni Hasan Syllabary. Contextualized within both a monastic *and* pedagogical locus, included elements likewise offer significant perspective that can again be used in further “identification” and “collection” of dispersed school remains.

Simultaneously, as extant portions of this artifact survive as disparate “puzzle pieces” on opposite sides of the ocean, “excavation” of attendant interpretive trajectories underscores the challenges inherent in reassembling even the most accessible, and readily identifiable monastic school exemplars. If falling under the curatorship of two equally illustrious, well-financed institutions fails to establish the requisite links between respective fragments of the same artifact, one must wonder if meaningful assignation – or in this case, its absence – is influenced by broader predispositions. That archaeology has historically privileged excavation of Pharaonic artifacts over Christian, Graeco-Roman over Coptic, Classical over Biblical, Biblical over monastic, and “high” literature over “low,” is well documented. The published “excavational” record of these fragments suggests that such historical choices have been further exacerbated by tacit refraction of Egyptian “desert” constituencies in simplistic binaries – here Greek and literate, Coptic and a-literate.

Categorization

The excavational history of a third school artifact affirms the competing interests that have shaped “identification” of the Beni Hasan Syllabary. It similarly attests the subtle linguistic and disciplinary predispositions which have influenced both “identification” and “collection” of the Epiphonian abecedary’s dispersed fragments. Most specifically, however, “excavating the excavations” of this final school piece invites further consideration of the determinative role that “categorization” has played in elucidating and/or effacing the material record of monastic pedagogical investment.

The artifact in question, like the abecedary discussed above, is provenanced to the Monastery of Epiphanius. It presently resides not in New York (or London), but in Cairo’s Coptic Museum.⁸⁴ In contrast to its

⁸³ Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.25–30; cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4. ⁸⁴ Cairo 44674.118.



Figure 5.7 Lines from Proverbs (Cairo 44674.118 verso). Photo: Dr. Kent Brown

fragmented counterpart, this small ostracon survives intact. Published and transcribed in Crum, Winlock, and White’s 1926 catalogue, it carries inscriptions on both *recto* and *verso* faces.⁸⁵

The ostracon’s *verso* preserves two excerpts from Proverbs (Figure 5.7):⁸⁶

ΟΥΝ ΝΕΤΕΙΠΕ ΜΜΟΥ ΝΡΗΜΑΘ ΕΜΠΤΟΥ ΛΑΔΥ ΔΥΩ ΟΥΝ ΝΕ[Τ]ΘΒΒΙΟ ΜΜΟΥ
ΕΥΖΝΟΥΝΘΣ ΜΜΝΤΡ[ΜΜΑΘ].

There are those who look rich, but have nothing; there are those who are poor, yet are very wealthy (Prov. 13.7).

ΠΕΤΚΑΤΑΦΡΟΝΕΙ ΝΟΥΖΩΒ ΣΕΝΑΚΑΤΑΦΡΟΠΕ ΜΜΟΥ ΠΕΤΡ ΖΩΒ ΔΕ ΖΗΤΣ
ΝΤΕΠΤΟΛΗ [ΠΑΙ]ΠΕ ΕΤΟΥΟΧ [Μ]Ν ΛΑΔΥ ΝΑΓΑΘΟ[Ν] ΝΑΩΩΠ[Ε].

Those who despise a matter, they will be despised; the one who acts according to the commandment, this one is safe; nothing good will happen [to a deceitful son] (Prov. 13.13).⁸⁷

The *recto* carries a third short sentence (Figure 5.8),⁸⁸ which the editors describe as “an unidentified quotation from Basil (of Caesarea)”:⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 5 and 157, 12 and 163, ns. 22, 52 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 22, 52).

⁸⁶ Cairo 44674.118 (*verso*); Great thanks are due to Kent Brown of Brigham Young University for generously sharing his extensive image files of the Cairo collection, and to Hany Takla for facilitating access. Closer examination, whether on site or via more detailed digital reproduction, remains a *desideratum*.

⁸⁷ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 5 and 157, n. 22 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 22). Thanks to Lance Jenott and Hugo Lundhaug for their assistance in rechecking and adjusting the transcriptions and translations provided in Crum *et al.*

⁸⁸ Cairo 44674.118 (*recto*). ⁸⁹ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 163, n. 52 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 52).

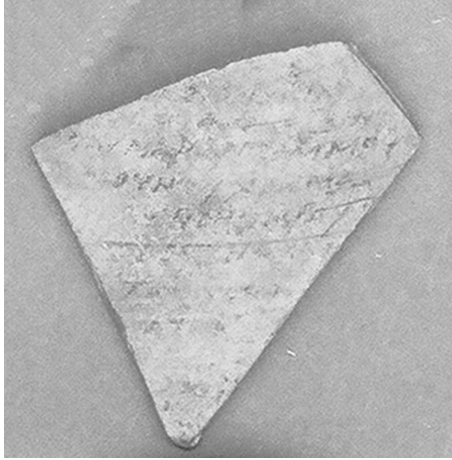


Figure 5.8 Saying of Basil (Cairo 44674.118 *recto*). Photo: Dr. Kent Brown

ΑΠΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΟΣ ΝΙΜ ΓΑΡ ΕΝΕΞ ΠΕΝΤΑΥΜΑΚΑΡΙΖΕ ΜΜΟQ ΧΕΟΥΝΤQ ΧΡΗΜΑ Η ΝΙΜ
ΠΕΝΤΑΦΟΥΧΔΙ ΕΦΕΝΟΥΜΤΟΝ ΠΙΩΝΑ.

Apa Basilius [said], “For who has ever been blessed because he had property, or who has been saved while in bodily rest?”⁹⁰

The artifact’s textual content is included in the Coptic portion of Crum, Winlock, and White’s publication. However, that the three sentences occupy two sides of the same ostrakon is less readily apparent. In fact, disparate “categorization” of the school text’s *recto* and *verso* faces offers something of a codicological parallel to challenges presented by the geographic dispersal of its fragmented counterpart. As catalogued, the *verso*’s two extracts from Proverbs are categorized as “Biblical Texts.”⁹¹ In turn, the “saying” attributed to Basil is included in a section entitled “Homilies, Epistles, [and] Narratives.”⁹² A Coptic transcription is provided for each of the three sentences. However, while the “unidentified” saying of Basil is accompanied by an English translation, the Proverbs are more cryptically designated solely by chapter and verse.

⁹⁰ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 12 and 163, n. 52; See also *O.Col.inv.* 766, where Cribiore (1997) identifies a lengthier Basilian homily, doubling as a copying exercise; cf. Larsen 2017.

⁹¹ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 5 and 157, no. 22; The second Proverb consists of a sequence of three shorter phrases. However, as transcribed, the final phrase appears incomplete (Crum *et al.* 1926: II 5, no. 22). Unfortunately, the low resolution of Brown’s photographic image offers little further grounds for reconstruction.

⁹² Crum *et al.* 1926: II 12 and 163, n. 52.

Beyond this, attendant description is terse. A brief note included in each of the artifact’s two catalogue descriptions marks connection between the *verso*⁹³ and *recto*⁹⁴ faces. This integral link is mentioned in passing, and there is little else to indicate that the two entries – and derivatively, the three sentences – are related. Only if one takes the time to locate, examine and/or translate the passages from Proverbs might one note the common emphases that connect this Biblical content with the “unidentified saying” of Basil. In turn, only if one is familiar with classroom pedagogical practice, might one identify the two lines from Proverbs as “gnomic sentences” or “maxims,” and the “saying” of Basil, as an aptly attributed *χρεῖα* (*chreía*).⁹⁵ Only then might one recognize this small ostrakon as school-related, and “categorize” its juxtaposed content as a fluid, monastic reworking of classic, pedagogical forms.⁹⁶

“Excavation” Report

In her richly detailed discussions of pedagogical source material, Cribiore has repeatedly underscored the challenges inherent to secure “categorization” of school artifacts that register more advanced levels of classroom practice. She observes that as skill levels increase, distinctive “school” features grow less perceptible. Granting this frame, if *readily* recognizable pedagogical pieces have escaped close scrutiny, it is perhaps hardly surprising that less patent monastic exemplars have likewise gone “unidentified.”⁹⁷ As “collected” and “recategorized,” however, the content included on this ostrakon’s two faces serves as something of a textbook example of well-documented school practice. Both form and thematic emphases bring to mind Jerome’s suggestion that Paula work with sentences and short passages that incorporate “rules of life [found in] the proverbs of Solomon.”⁹⁸ Elsewhere, classroom exercises involving

⁹³ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 157, n. 22. ⁹⁴ Crum *et al.* 1926: II 163, n. 52.

⁹⁵ Cf. Hock and O’Neil 1986; Larsen 2008; 2013a.

⁹⁶ In introducing his compendium of *Progymnasmata*, George Kennedy likens such elementary grammatical and rhetorical forms to the “structural features of Classical architecture” (2003: ix). Dahlman and Zaborowski, this volume, richly demonstrate the use of what might be framed as alternately adaptive strategies that arguably remain grounded in commensurate training and practice.

⁹⁷ Cf. Cribiore 1996, 2001.

⁹⁸ Jerome, *Ep.* 107.12 (Wright 1933: 364–5); cf. Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 15; Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Macrina* 962c–964a.

apt attribution of familiar maxims – or their paraphrased equivalents – to philosophers, teachers and/or civic leaders are repeatedly commended.⁹⁹

As this ostrakon's juxtaposed *sententiae* elucidate both the fluid and static character of monastic practice, they likewise offer emblematic *exempla* that can again serve as models for further "excavation." While firm answers to questions of purpose remain ambivalent – that is, whether included content functioned as a teacher's model, or student practice lines, or mark the later work of a monk privy to training in classic pedagogical forms¹⁰⁰ – apt paraphrase of lines/maxims from Proverbs, reworked and reattributed to an illustrious monastic elder, usefully elucidate both adoptive and adaptive praxis. In predictable and provocative ways, as alternate authoritative content fluidly melds with established forms, each ensures continued concern that the lines set before young students avoid "thoughts of no significance" and include subject matter that might prove useful later in life.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Given longstanding scholarly predisposition, the challenges inherent in first finding, then "identifying," "collecting" and "categorizing" the school texts addressed in this essay are hardly incidental.¹⁰² Although each exemplar merits further consideration, in reassembling excavated physical and literary landscapes which have long been framed in binaries, the clear parallels that link monastic with broader praxis affirm the merits of even provisional reassessment. The present, relatively limited, survey suggests that like their Graeco-Roman counterparts, monastic

⁹⁹ Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.36; cf. Kennedy 2003 for an accessible collection of requisite forms. See Krawiec 2012, Muehlberger this volume, Pevarello 2013 and this volume, Sheridan 2007 and this volume, for discussion of alternate monastic exemplars; cf. Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2013a, 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Maravela, this volume.

¹⁰¹ Quintilian enjoins, "And as we are still discussing minor details, I would urge that the lines, which [a child] is set to copy, should not express thoughts of no significance, but convey some sound moral lesson. [A child] will remember such aphorisms even when he is an old man, and the impression made upon his unformed mind will contribute to the formation of his character. He may also be entertained by learning the sayings of famous men and above all selections from the poets" (*Inst.* 1.1.35–6 [Russell 2001: 36–7]).

¹⁰² Cf. Goehring's 2005 rereading of the interpretive layers that have shaped engagement with the physical landscape of monastic Egypt.

students progressed from rehearsing the alphabet to intoning syllables, words, sentences, and ultimately, continuous passages. Letters were learned both by sequence and by shape. Alphabets were memorized in variously ordered configurations.¹⁰³ So recontextualized, the changes that characterize the results examined here appear so cosmetic that the real enigma may be the degree to which long-lived myths of monastic a- and begrudging literacy have remained residually in place – and trenchantly uninterrogated. As Psalms replace lines drawn from Homer; monks and illustrious church leaders double as philosophers and civic figures; Biblical names are introduced into the rosters of Classical heroes; and prophets and apostles “stand in” for Greek gods and goddesses, both pedagogical form and conceptual content endure.¹⁰⁴

If one reverses long-standing emphases (and de-emphases) by according equal weight to text *and* context, content *and* form, emergent intersections elucidate monastic norms which parallel the types of practice encountered in a broad cross-section of extant school evidence.¹⁰⁵ At once, predictable and provocative, common threads underscore the importance of recognizing that a monastic chart of three letter combinations is still a syllabary; that a compilation of Biblical names remains a word list; that patterned strings of letters – whether recorded in “Greek” or “Coptic” – retain the signature traits of an “abecedary”; that lines from Proverbs function equally well as maxims; and, whether attributed to Diogenes or Basil, register remarkable affinity with “sayings” and/or *χρῆται*.¹⁰⁶ In the end, however, acknowledging the interpretive layers that continue to shape “identification,” “collection,” and “categorization” of this content is not incidental. Which artifacts are included, where, and how, can stymie, or aid, even the most critically informed “excavational” efforts.

Persistent patterns also suggest that if the “absent chapter” that is “monastic education” is ever to be written, recognizing the merits of conceiving more complex constructs – characterized by continuity *and* change – remains essential. Here, rendering hybrid the narrowly defined

¹⁰³ As summarized by Marrou 1956: 150; cf. Cribiore 1996; 2001; Morgan 1998; Larsen 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Maravela’s recent re-examination of monastic reuse of excerpts drawn from Homer and Menander (this volume), calls attention to parallel juxtapositions of enduring form infused with fluid content. With Bucking, however, Maravela is more reticent in assigning these monastic artifacts conventional pedagogical function; cf. Larsen 2006a; 2008; 2013a; 2017.

¹⁰⁵ In laying the foundation for these analyses, ongoing work with Cribiore’s (1996) detailed catalogue of school texts has proved invaluable.

¹⁰⁶ Larsen 2017; cf. Hock and O’Neil 1986; Larsen 2001; 2006a; 2006b; 2008; 2013a; 2013b.

binaries that have long circumscribed readings of the monastic material record may prove to be *the* missing “puzzle piece” in conceiving more plausible pedagogical landscapes – populated by diverse constituencies, characterized by a spectrum of investment and demonstrably involved in an exceptionally conventional range of literate pursuits.

6 | Homer and *Menandri Sententiae* in Upper Egyptian Monastic Settings^{*}

ANASTASIA MARAVELA

Homer and verse maxims, which trace their origins back to Classical poetry, had a stable presence in Greek educational practice throughout Antiquity. This is no less true of Greco-Roman Egypt, as amply demonstrated by Raffaella Cribiore's comprehensive survey of the papyri and other studies on Greek education in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.¹ When evidence for Homer and/or verse maxims emerges from settings in Egypt that may be described as securely or possibly monastic, the question of the relationship between monastery and school naturally comes into sharp focus.

Demonstrable links between Classical *paideia* and monastic settings in Egypt are few and far between.² Documentary evidence for the borrowing of books as well as the so-called book lists (inventories of book-holdings or commissions for the production of books) from the early Byzantine period give the impression that the holdings of Egyptian monastic libraries either did not include works of Classical Greek literature or if they did, these works were not in wide circulation.³ Notable exceptions are excerpts from the Homeric epics and the collections of single-verse maxims loosely connected with the comic poet Menander (commonly known as *Menandri Sententiae*) that come from Upper Egyptian monasteries which flourished in the period from the late fifth to the seventh/eighth centuries. The monastic connection makes these finds much more than mere textual testimonies as they potentially offer insights into the *Sitz im Leben* of standard Greek educational texts within Egyptian monastic communities and by extension into the Christian

* I thank the organisers of the workshop 'Monastic Libraries and Readings' (Lund University 2012), the conference 'Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia*' (Lund University, 2013) and the workshop on monastic *paideia* (ISAW 2014) for invitations to present versions of this paper, and the participants for critical responses. Thanks are also extended to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and to the Butler Library, Columbia University, for allowing me to inspect the relevant ostraca. Thanks also to Cornelia Römer (Cairo) and Michael Zellmann-Rohrer (Berkeley) for useful comments on earlier versions.

¹ Cribiore 1996: 44–6 and 49–51; Morgan 1998: 120–51; Cribiore 2001: 194–201.

² For an alternate assessment, see Larsen's contribution to this volume, Larsen 2006a, 2013a, *et al.*

³ Dostálová 1985; Otranto 1997; Kotsifou 2007; Maehler 2008; Maravela 2008.

monastics' real contact with and reception of Classical Greek culture and education.

The interrelated aims of this paper are twofold: first, to explore the position and role of Classical Greek *paideia* within Egyptian monasticism as illuminated by textual finds from the monasteries in the region of Western Thebes; and secondly, in the light of these, to reflect on the relationship between monastery and school in a specifically Egyptian (or even Upper Egyptian) setting in Late Antiquity.

Monastic Settlements in Western Thebes

In the sixth and seventh centuries, the region of Western Thebes was honeycombed with monastic settlements, formed from single anchorites' cells or, more often, from laura-type cell clusters.⁴ They arose as Christian redevelopments of the Pharaonic-period tombs and mortuary temples in the Theban necropolis. The nearest residential centre to the south was the town of (D)jeme/Medinet Habu, which developed on and around the mortuary temple of Ramses III. In the early days of Egyptian archaeology and papyrology, the investigation of these monastic settlements followed a random pattern: in some sites (Deir el-Bahri/Monastery of St Phoebammon) the Christian remains were cleared away to give access to the more interesting earlier phases of the site, thus decontextualising the textual record from Late Antiquity; other sites were visited intermittently by plunderers, and their textual contents reached papyrus collections with only very general (if any) information about provenance; finally, in a few exceptional cases (most notably, the Monastery of Epiphanius) monastic sites were excavated and the finds were published with something approaching proper scientific standards.⁵ Important research projects continue to shed light on the Christian monastic phase of the region and to connect unprovenanced finds in museums and papyrus collections with specific sites.⁶

⁴ For a presentation of the most important monastic establishments in the area, see Wipszycka 2009: 171–97.

⁵ On the historical background of the scholarly investigation of the area, see Wilfong 1989, O'Connell 2006, O'Connell 2010 and Krause 2010.

⁶ Since 2001 the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI), Abt. Kairo in collaboration with the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München has been excavating the nearby site Deir el-Bachit (*topos* of Apa Paulos), see Burkard, Mackensen and Polz 2003 and Beckh, Eichner and Hodak 2011; the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw (PCMA) in 2003 surveyed the hill Sheikh Abd el-Kurneh and discovered two codices and numerous ostraca, see Górecki 2007. A Hungarian mission led by T. A. Bács has explored the so-called Monastery of Cyriacus and the textual finds have been published partly in Hasznos 2013,

The *Topos* of Epiphanius

Although it was probably neither the most populous nor the most important among the Western Theban monastic settlements, the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius (conventionally referred to in the scholarly literature as the Monastery of Epiphanius) is by far the best documented one as it became the object of proper excavation, carried out in 1911–1912 and 1913–1914 under the aegis of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The finds were published in two splendid volumes, one documenting the settlement itself and the other the textual finds.⁷ The monastic cluster was located halfway up the rocky slope of the Sheikh ‘Abd el-Kurneh’ hill. Its nucleus and main dwelling was the rock-cut tomb of vizier Daga (TT103, XI dynasty). A series of interconnected rooms erected in front of the central of the seven entrances to the tomb led into the burial chamber through a narrow corridor. This was accessed through a T-shaped room, labelled ‘vestibule’ by the excavators. It was paved with sandstone slabs, had benches around the passage walls and several arched niches on the walls on either side of the central part of the space. The niches were covered with doctrinal texts in Coptic and Greek, painted in red letters. They were placed in such a way as to be legible to those crossing the vestibule or sitting on the benches.⁸ The complex was separated from the outside world by an enclosure that encompassed a courtyard and two towers, used for storage and as dwelling places. The cemetery was located a few metres outside the enclosure wall.

The cluster included three further cells, the so-called outlying cells A–C, which also developed in and around rock-cut pharaonic tombs.⁹ Cells A and B, which have yielded the textual finds which interest us in the present context, were located at a distance of less than 100 metres from the main dwelling. Cell A was at approximately the same height as the Tomb of Daga/main dwelling, while cell B was located ca. 10 metres above cell A. They were connected to the main dwelling through a path leading up to its rear entrance.

while a joint research project of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Heike Behlmer, Matthew Underwood) and Macquarie University, Sydney (Malcolm Choat) deals with the textual material from various tombs (TT233, TT84, TT85, TT95), see Behlmer 2003, Behlmer and Underwood 2010.

⁷ The first volume will appear in the footnotes as Crum, *et al.* (1926), and the second as *Mon. Epiph.* (= Crum, *et al.* 1926: II).

⁸ Plan of the space in Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 27, fig. 2. Texts *Mon.Epiph.* (= Crum, *et al.* 1926: II) Appendix I, inscriptions A–K.

⁹ Described in Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 39–45.

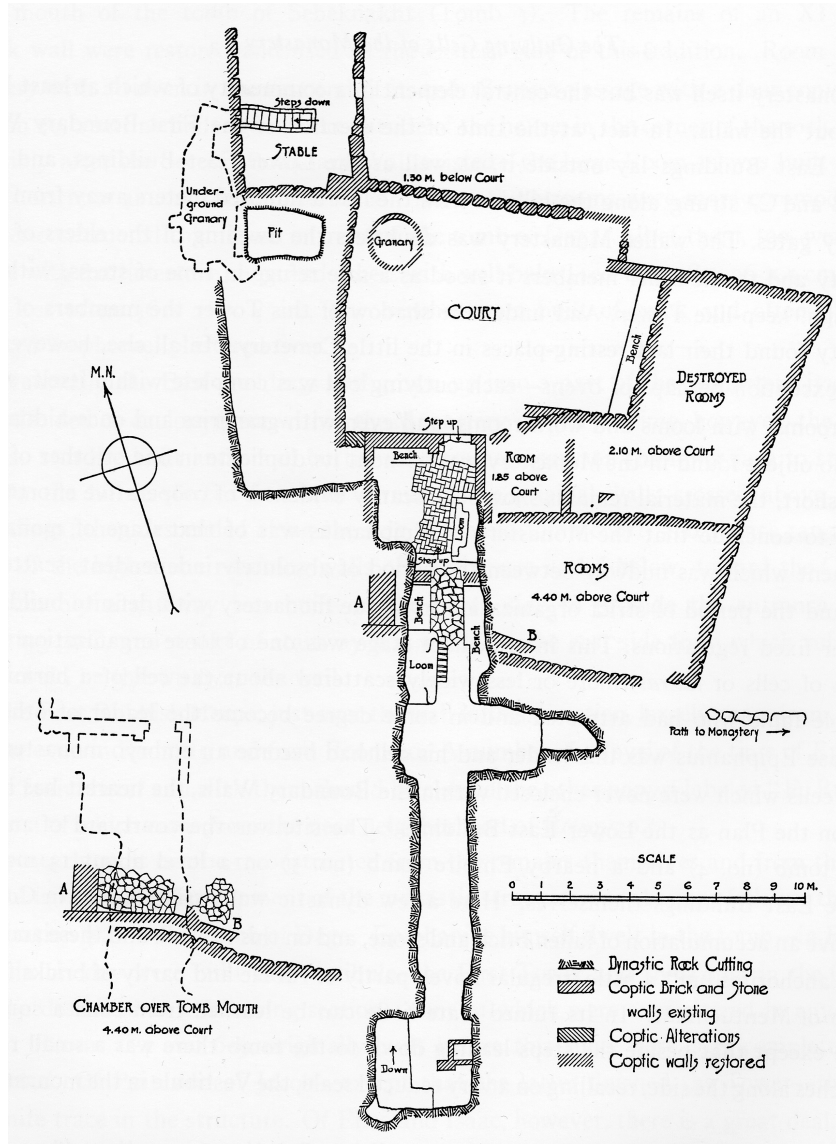


Figure 6.1 Monastery of Epiphanius, Cell A. From H. E. Winlock and W. E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes 1* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926), 40

Cell A (Figure 6.1) was by far the larger and more elaborate of the two outlying dwellings. A small and narrow XI-dynasty tomb had been extended by means of a square room erected in front of the single entrance. This space corresponded to the so-called vestibule of the main dwelling. Its floor had

been paved with limestone chips. Benches had been built against the walls to the right of the entrance while a loom occupied the innermost left corner. This design continued as one proceeded deeper into the corridor, climbing a step up and into a tile-paved section with benches along the walls and a second loom placed against the wall to the far right after a bench. A stone wall surrounded the structure creating a small courtyard which included a granary.

Cell B (Figure 6.2), originally also a small and narrow XI-dynasty tomb, had a very similar layout but on an even smaller and more modest scale. An extension had been added in front of the entrance. The entrance room had benches along its walls. A recess over the bench to the right was decorated with a stele containing either a text mentioning the Council of Chalcedon or a homily.¹⁰ The benches along the walls, which were plastered and whitewashed to a certain depth, continued as one proceeded deeper into the corridor-like space. A hole in the floor led down into a very low chamber, thought to have functioned as a place of retreat.

In terms of domestic economy the outlying cells appear to have been self-sufficient units with dwelling rooms, workspaces, equipment and granaries. Cell A even had its own donkey stable. In all probability they were dependent on the main dwelling only for the preparation of their bread, as they seem to have had no oven. The remains of organic materials and the implements recovered indicate that the monks were occupied with the production of mats, baskets, clothing and leatherwork in order to earn a living.¹¹

Homeric Ostraca in Epiphanius

Four ostraca, *Mon.Epiph.* 611–14, each preserving a Homeric line or two, were recovered ‘around cell B’ according to the excavator, who does not record the precise find spots.¹² Of these, *Mon.Epiph.* 613 (*Il.* 1.201 and *passim*) and 614 (part of *Il.* 1.22) no longer belong to the MMA collection, and it has not been possible to locate them.¹³ The remaining two ostraca preserve the opening line(s) of the *Iliad* in various degrees of completeness.

¹⁰ *Mon.Epiph.* 587 (= TM 112423) or 588 (= TM 112424).

¹¹ Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 39, 51–78 and 154–9.

¹² Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 44, n. 4. Other textual finds in the cell include: *Mon.Epiph.* 573 = P.Rain. UnterrichtKopt. 276, TM 87109 (disconnected phrases, Coptic); *Mon.Epiph.* 618 = P.Rain. UnterrichtKopt. 252, TM 65159 (days of the week with planetary equivalents, Greek); *Mon.Epiph.* 589 = TM 65336 (homily, Greek); *Mon.Epiph.* 608 = TM 65223 (troparion, Greek). *Mon.Epiph.* 571 and 2, included in the list, come from an ‘unnumbered grave’ according to the relevant entries in *Mon.Epiph.* (= Crum, *et al.* 1926: II).

¹³ TM 61100 and 61109, respectively.

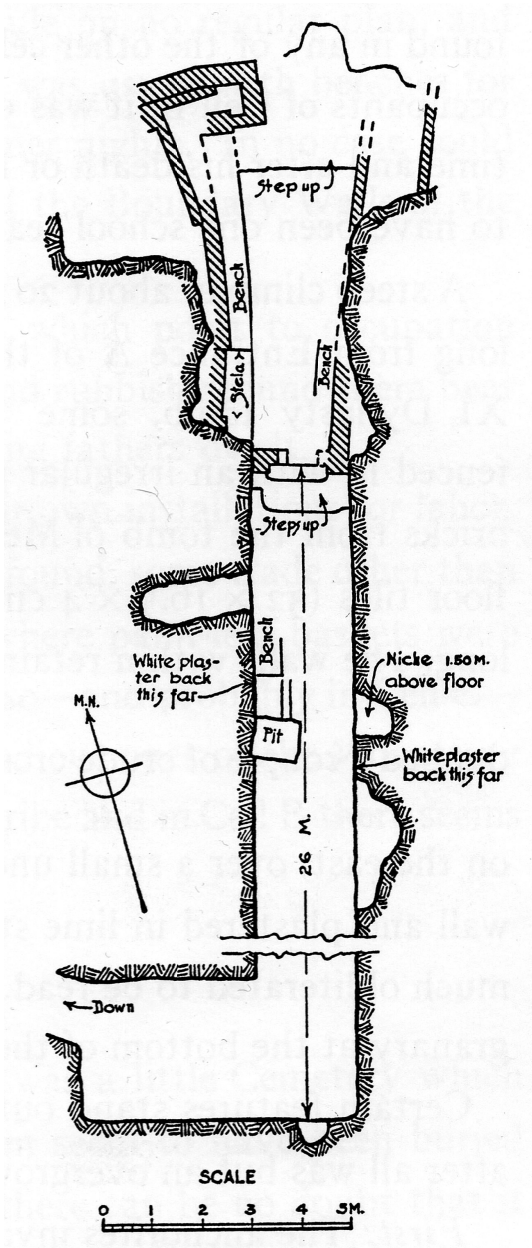


Figure 6.2 Monastery of Epiphanius, Cell B. From H. E. Winlock and W. E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes 1* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926), 43

Mon.Epiph. 611 (Figure 6.3),¹⁴ a limestone ostrakon with a very uneven surface, preserves in its upper middle and right part three instances of *Iliad* 1.1, the one arranged directly under the other. The beginning of writing is marked by a cross, a graphic convention at the time.¹⁵ In the first two lines where the text reaches the edge of the broken ostrakon, it is unclear whether the entire verse was copied out. It is, however, beyond any doubt that when copying the verse for the third time, the copyist gave up at the end of the second metrical foot. The hand, which writes a fluid documentary cursive, is the same throughout although some letter forms in l. 1 (most notably M and N) are traced differently than the corresponding forms in ll. 2 and 3. The repetition of the same phrase suggests indeed that the aim was to be an ‘exercise in cursive Greek.’¹⁶ Even so the organic diaeresis over the *iota* of Πηληϊάδε[ω] (*Pēlēiáde[ō]*) at l. 2 indicates a certain level of care and understanding of the text.¹⁷ In the blank space to the left of the three instances of *Il.* 1.1, the same verse has been copied once again, possibly by another hand attempting to imitate the documentary cursive of the first copyist.¹⁸

The final result is on the whole less successful than that achieved by the first hand: the writing appears more cursive and is partially marred by an ink smudge. Below the Homeric lines an artless, messy hand penned a letter (whether real or model) in Coptic.¹⁹ At 12 x 10 cm this ostrakon could fit into an open palm. The second Iliadic ostrakon from cell B (Figure 6.4) is triangular and much smaller, measuring a mere 3.7 x 3.8 cm. Nevertheless, the front surface accommodates *Iliad* 1.1 and the first word that occupies one and a half metrical feet of *Il.* 1.2. The text follows the contours of the ostrakon, which suggests that the writing surface retains its original shape and size. On the back, the same hand has continued with more of *Il.* 1.2 (ἡ μύρι’ Ἀχαιοί [*hē múri’ Achaií*]), giving up at

¹⁴ TM 61111; Cribiore 1996: 213, no. 168. Digital images for this and the other ostraca are accessible through the MMA website.

¹⁵ Carlig 2013: 69.

¹⁶ Editor’s description of *Mon.Epiph.* 611. Cribiore 1996: 213, no. 168 ‘Very proficient, a scribe’ and Bucking 2007: 41 ‘a highly skilled cursive hand that is very suggestive of a professional scribal setting. . .’

¹⁷ I owe this observation to Michael Zellmann-Rohrer.

¹⁸ The fourth occurrence of *Il.* 1.1 is preceded by a cross, which also indicates a fresh beginning, i.e., another scribe at work.

¹⁹ Bucking 2007: 41–2 maintains that the fourth copy of *Il.* 1.1 is penned by the same hand that wrote the Coptic text. He names as criteria the darker colour of the ink and what he takes as ligaturing of the final letter of the Homeric quotation with the chrism at the beginning of the Coptic letter. In my opinion, it is not certain that there is a chrism at the beginning of the Coptic letter, just a drawn-out version of the letter *eta*. In turn, the hand writing in Coptic is not necessarily identical with a second hand, or at least the matter cannot be firmly determined. Cribiore 1996: 213: ‘Coptic text by different hand’ and Cribiore 1999: 282.

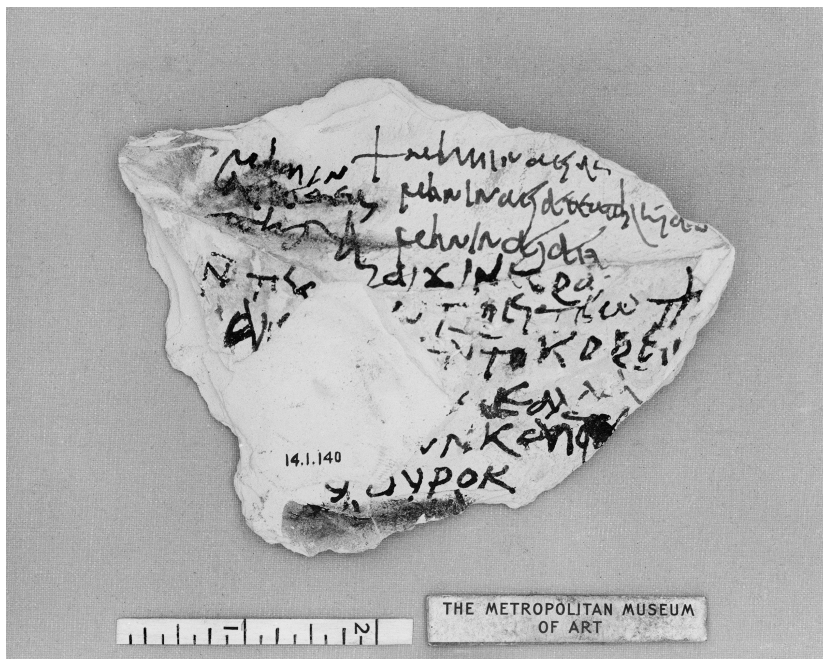


Figure 6.3 Homer, *Iliad* 1.1 (*Mon.Epiph.* 611 = O.MMA. 14.1.140).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1914, 14.1.140). ©

2015 The Metropolitan Museum of Art/ Art Resource/Scala, Florence

mid-word in the fourth metrical foot.²⁰ This hand also uses fluent documentary cursive²¹ that resembles that of *Mon.Epiph.* 611 but the limited space causes the copyist to downsize the letters. The hand and, above all, the minimal dimensions of the writing surface point again to a writing exercise aimed at practising cursive Greek script with the aid of a memorable verse. This may also have been the case with the other two Iliadic ostraca, *Mon.Epiph.* 613 and 614, the whereabouts of which are currently unknown, as mentioned above. They preserve the recurrent Homeric formulae καὶ μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα ('and addressing him/her (s)he uttered winged words') and ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ('then all others'), respectively.²² The cursive hand and the

²⁰ Neither the first edition nor any of the subsequent studies note that the scribe continues *Il.* 1.2 on the back.

²¹ Crihiore 1996: 225, no. 225: 'Rapid, competent and well developed cursive letters'.

²² Crihiore 1996: 225–6, nos. 226 and 227. The former line counts thirty-one occurrences in total in the Homeric epics, while the latter counts nine occurrences. Strictly speaking, it is not certain that the scribe had the passages from *Iliad* 1 in mind, although Homer's "readers" in Egypt showed a marked preference for the first book of this poem. The two ostraca may be viewed simply as quotations of Homeric formulae.

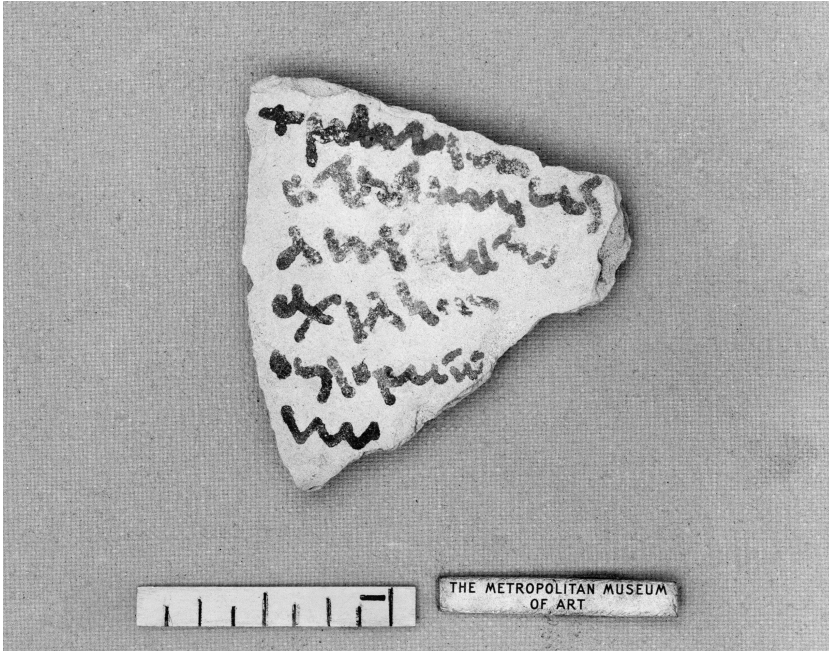


Figure 6.4 Homer, *Iliad* 1.1–2 (*Mon.Epiph.* 612 = *O.MMA.* 14.1.139).
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1914, 14.1.139). © 2015
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence

formulaic character of the text copied would also indicate that the goal was to practice writing.

A School in Epiphanius?

Somewhat surprisingly, given the assessment of the individual pieces, the editors of the Epiphanius textual material advanced a different overall interpretation of the setting, remarking apropos *Mon.Epiph.* 611, ‘this example, with 612–614, suggests that Homer was still used even in monastic schools—if only to provide copy-book maxims’. The cache of texts recovered in cell B led them to wonder whether one of its inhabitants might have been active as a school teacher.²³ They were reluctant to accept the idea that the monastic dwellers of the place were active in teaching the young, however.²⁴ Subsequent scholarly discussions based on this evidence and on the gnomological material from the site as well have been more prone to acknowledge the possibility that elementary teaching took place in

²³ Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 44. ²⁴ Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 165 and 192 (and n. 14).

the monastery.²⁵ In a recent article on the meeting between monasticism and the pagan philosophical, and more broadly literate, heritage, Samuel Rubenson states:

The tangible evidence we have for elementary teaching in a monastic setting, for the monastery as school, has up to now been centred on Upper Egypt and emerges from the archaeological excavations of monasteries of a somewhat later period (sixth to eighth centuries), where numerous papyri and ostraka used for school exercises, as well as copies of Homer and the Sentences of Menander, have been found in situ. But no thorough investigation of all material indicating school activity in early monastic sites has yet been done. A possible reason for the fact that the evidence for elementary education comes from monasteries in Upper Egypt may well be that it was mainly here that monastic communities were receiving monks who had not received any or much elementary education. As suggested elsewhere, it is reasonable to think that the creation of an elementary education on a Christian basis first happened in the periphery of traditional Greek culture.²⁶

At the opposite end of the spectrum Scott Bucking has questioned the straightforward connection of this and other material with formal schooling and has elaborated alternative scenarios depending on the type of evidence and its context, including documentary writing/scrabal practice and personal use/private education.²⁷

In the specific case of cell B, while the presence of Homeric quotations – a standard educational text – immediately suggests school objects, the documentary hand and format of the texts corroborate the scenario of writing practice governed by practical or vocational aims. Moreover, the entire textual and archaeological layout of cell B needs to be brought to bear on the question, to the extent that this is possible. As stressed by the editors, cell B was a favourite place of pilgrimage for locals and visitors from places farther away who scratched requests on the walls to the holy man to pray on their behalf. In the ‘vestibule’ the visitors would have read the dogmatic or edifying text displayed on the stele – presumably giving

²⁵ Cribiore 1997: 192, Cribiore 2001: 24–5 (both times cautiously, though), Larsen 2006a, 2008, 2013a, repeated by Rubenson 2012: 504–5. In her 2006 PhD thesis and subsequent work (Larsen 2008, Larsen 2013a and Larsen this volume), Larsen in particular has identified the educational function as a possible link between the monastic apophthegmatic literature and pagan collections of sayings. In Larsen 2008: 24, e.g., she wonders whether ‘gnomic sentences serve[d] a pedagogical role in the monastic milieu similar to the traditional rhetorical role accorded to sayings in ancient grammatical instruction’.

²⁶ Rubenson 2012: 504, drawing on Larsen 2006a; 2008; 2013a; See also Larsen this volume.

²⁷ Bucking 2007 and 2012.

a clear exposition of the doctrinal position of its anchoretic occupants.²⁸ This setting is not incompatible with the possibility that the premises were used as a school as well; on the other hand, there is no decisive feature of the interior design that would indicate a school either, apart from the benches that characterise places of gathering in general, not schools in particular.

Of the other texts reportedly found in cell B, *Mon.Epiph.* 589, 608 and 618 offer some interesting perspectives with respect to the question of education. *Mon.Epiph.* 608²⁹ is a limestone ostrakon the upper- and mid-left part of which has been chipped off leaving an ample surface blank. It probably bore two troparia, texts to be chanted in mass, one of which may have had the birth of Christ as a theme. The hand was a neat, clearly legible book hand, though some of the letters connected and some were penned rather rapidly. On the blank surface that was created as a result of the chipping, a scribe penned a word or two in rapid documentary cursive, again a sort of writing practice. Documentary cursive is also practised, admittedly in a rather messy manner, on the back of *Mon.Epiph.* 589.³⁰ The front side of this ostrakon has a text, penned in a practised, though not very elegant hand. The editors label the text ‘homiletic’, even if they consider the possibility of it serving as a school exercise. Although the content of the main text cannot be fully reconstructed, some noteworthy points are sufficiently clear: the third-person subject, whose identity is uncertain,³¹ is said to ‘grant to the ones who have learnt’ (l. 6]. δίδωσι τοῖς μαθη[ῶσι [*dídōsi tois matho[usi]*) and again to ‘grant to the ones who comprehend’ (l. 7] δίδωσι τοῖς νοοῦσ[ι [*dídōsi tois noous[i]*). The same ideas are repeated in similar wording in ll. 8–9. But by far the most interesting clue about this piece may be provided by l. 2, if it is restored not as in the first edition, i.e.,] ὥτα εἰδῶς .[(*ôta eidôs*), but as γράμ]ματα εἰδῶς .[(*grám]mata eidôs*), ‘knowing letters/being in possession of learning’. Learning (or specifically, learning to write), knowledge, understanding and the benefits or rewards gained from it is the topic, if the restoration is tenable. The text, which in this reading is taken to reflect some of the core values of its user(s), is compatible with

²⁸ The excavators assume that the vestibules were assembly spaces for the monks and reception spaces for their visitors, see Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 30–1, and on the vestibule in the main dwelling, see MacCoull 1998: 314–16.

²⁹ TM 65223. Digital images are accessible through the MMA website.

³⁰ TM 65336. Digital images are accessible through the MMA website.

³¹ The editors supplemented κύρι[ι, ‘the lord’ at the end of l. 1 but this may not be the subject at all or the subject may have changed by the time we reach ll. 6–9, see *Mon.Epiph.* 589, pp. 126 and 308.

either an educational or a scribal setting depending on the connotations of the restored reading γράμματα (letters).

The main hand of *Mon.Epiph.* 618 shows certain similarities with the hands of 608 and 589, so that it is not inconceivable that all three ostraca were produced by the same scribe. It contains a list of the days of the week and their equivalents in the planetary week,³² and was classified with the school objects in the edition. The hand was aptly described as ‘evolving, pretentious with separated capitals decorated by serifs and roundels’.³³ Two phases are discernible in the production of the text. As a first step the main copyist produced separate lists on either side of the ostrakon. This hand is not fully proficient but the mannerisms point to someone with scribal ambitions and a degree of training.³⁴ As a second step the same or, more likely, a second hand wielding a much thinner pen drew a dividing line formatted as a long, forked *paragraphos* and combined each of the days from Monday to Friday with its planetary equivalent. The second phase may have occurred as a result of the will or instruction of the producer of the independent lists, or independently at a later point. This is hard to determine. However, it is noteworthy that the combined version reproduces the content not the form of the first version. The hand which produces the combined list neglects the (semi-) calligraphic aspect of the model, copying and rearranging the content in (semi-) cursive. This would indicate learning or curiosity, not practice, as the main motive of the second copyist, while the first copyist is clearly interested also (if not primarily) in the form.

Interest in documentary writing in this particular monastic setting is documented also by *Mon.Epiph.* 620,³⁵ reported as recovered in the ‘original monastery’.³⁶ It contains the Greek alphabet arranged in four

³² P.Rain.UnterrichtKopt. 252, TM 65159. The text has been recently re-edited by Rodney Ast (P. Bagnall 2: 15–16) and discussed as a testimony for the use of the planetary names of the days of the week. Digital images are accessible through the MMA website.

³³ Cribiore 1996: 202, no. 122.

³⁴ Cribiore 1996: 97–118 for a detailed discussion of criteria used in identifying and categorising school hands.

³⁵ TM 65161; Cribiore 1996: 189, no. 67. Digital images are accessible through the MMA website.

³⁶ About the value of this provenance indication, see Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, xxii–xxiii: ‘The whole place was a mass of broken pottery of which only a comparatively small part was inscribed. Many of the latter fragments would escape the diggers and be carried off to the dumps where they would be found by the [basket-] boys after it was too late to make an accurate record of their original positions. So far as possible we guarded against these fragments being mixed with the others and have given them merely the general designations of “original monastery” or “east buildings”, depending upon the season in which they were found (...) The site of the East Buildings was similarly covered with a large heap from excavations at the tomb of Sebeknakht. From these dumps came a large proportion of the ostraca, but having been recently disturbed,

lines with the individual letters standing independently. The syntagm θεοφιλέστατοι μοναχοί ('monks most beloved of God/having the highest love for God') was penned underneath with its letters ligatured. The hand displays advanced skill and has been described as 'proficient, writing in clear, exemplary cursives. A model'.³⁷ Paulinus Bellet accurately formulated the interpretative dilemmas posed by ostraca of this kind when in his discussion of *Mon.Epiph.* 616 he remarked:

The interpretation of these materials on ostraca, especially those having the simple alphabet or (...) with a simple line of literary ductus, is not always easy. To call these texts school texts does not exhaust everything that can be said. An alphabet can be an exercise by a pupil, a dictation, a calligraphic model by a teacher, proof offered by a pupil of his training, a simple *probatio pennae* and so on.³⁸

Cribiore has stated as regards well-written alphabets on ostraca, 'it is unclear whether they were written by regular teachers, by scribes, or by teachers in scribal schools'.³⁹ It seems to me that in this particular case the fact that the alphabet includes three cursive variants of the letter lambda (ll. 2–3) strongly suggests that the copyist was not a conventional teacher but someone aiming either at imparting skills in documentary writing or at testing and developing (or even demonstrating) his own skill. On the other hand, the sparsity of the sample from the *topos* of Epiphanius as well as the representation of scribal activity in the monasteries in the relevant literature suggest small-scale scribal activity rather than a scribal school proper.

Homer in Deir el-Bahri/St Phoebammon

Interesting comparative perspectives are offered by another Homeric ostrakon, apparently originating from the nearby Monastery of St Phoebammon/Deir el-Bahri. Limestone O.Col. inv. 949⁴⁰ (sixth century; Figure 6.5) belongs to a lot of (predominantly Coptic) ostraca cleared away during Naville's excavation of the site in the excavator's eagerness to

their finding-places meant nothing, and they also were recorded as coming from the Original Monastery, or from the East Buildings. Thus, of the published texts in Part II no less than 140 bear the first of these two unsatisfactory labels, although it is unquestionable that at least many of the papyri among them were thrown out from the interior of the tomb by Maspero's workmen and should be classed with those from Epiphanius' own room.'

³⁷ Cribiore 1996: 189, no. 67. ³⁸ Bellet 1982: 4.

³⁹ Cribiore 1996: 125. The same scholar has also pointed out that many of the texts assembled in P. Rain.UnterrichtKopt. 'were proficiently written by scribes and correspond to similar texts written in Greek schools specializing in scribal education' (Cribiore 1999: 280, and n. 9).

⁴⁰ TM 117723. *Ed.pr.* Cribiore 2008: 42–4.

unveil earlier phases of the monument (mortuary temple of Hatshepsut). Naville's dump was re-excavated by Winlock in 1926–1928, and the ostraca recovered ended up (via the MMA) in the collection of Columbia University.⁴¹ The inscribed surface (the back is blank) preserves four short lines. These form pairs in terms of both content and form. Lines 1–2 are a version of the second half of *Il.* 3.61 stripped of all traits of Homer's poetic idiom and slightly but significantly altered: ὑπ' ἀνέρος ὅς ῥά τε τέχνη (*hup' anéros hós rá te téchnêi*) has been replaced by ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός| ὅστις τῇ τέχνη (*hupò tou andròs hóstis têi téchnêi*). This is no well-worn Homeric formula like the ones on the Epiphanius ostraca but a unique expression from a simile employed by Paris in his reply to Hector's reproaches, one of the rare similes uttered by a Homeric character (as opposed to the epic narrator). Lines 3–4 contain the not-so-common formula ἀμείβετο δῖα γυναικῶν (*ameíbeto dia gunaikôn*), used twice (*Il.* 3.171 and 228) to introduce replies by Helen to Priam in the *Teichoscopia* ('Viewing from the Wall'). The writing style changes dramatically from the first to the last line. The top pair of lines is in bookhand – a specimen of the sloping pointed majuscule, written with a thin pen. In l. 2 the same style is carried on but bilinearity is broken by an *iota* projecting above and below the line, and the last word exhibits an impressive ligature. There is, thus, a development towards a more documentary hand. The next pair of lines is written in pure cursive, exhibiting increasing speed and ligaturing.

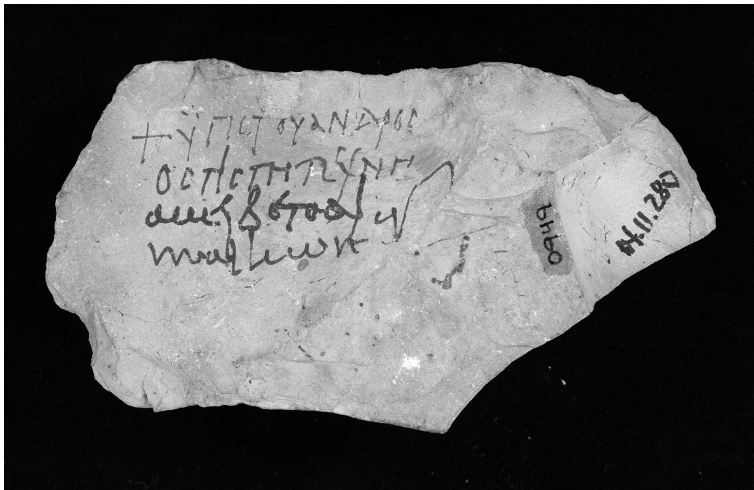


Figure 6.5 Lines from Homer, *Iliad* (O.Col.inv. 949). Columbia Libraries

⁴¹ Acq. 64.11.280. On the provenance of the Columbia ostraca, see O'Connell 2006.

As the editor has remarked, ‘at least two hands are present, but it is not clear how many writers were involved’.⁴² The editor is inclined to associate this puzzling combination of Homeric paraphrase and citation with ‘the practice of questions and answers that went on in the ancient classroom’, hypothesising that ‘the teacher may have asked the student to provide a clear paraphrase of l. 61 in order to show that he understood it properly and then required of him to write down the ending of 171’.⁴³ This interpretation places the hermeneutic weight on text-type, taking as its starting point the well-documented use of Homer in education in the form of short excerpts written verbatim or paraphrased. On the other hand the interpretation of the piece as ‘scribal exercise or pen trial’⁴⁴ transposes the weight of proof onto palaeography, as it assumes (without actually proving) that monastic provenance in itself enhances the plausibility of the piece representing scribal practice, a possibility already raised by the editor.⁴⁵

This is not a matter of ‘railroading epistemologies’⁴⁶ but of what criterion one considers to be weightier in a case where criteria point in different directions. For my part I would like to offer two observations which may perhaps have some bearing on the assessment of the piece: the two pairs of lines position ‘a man who by his craft/expertise’ against ‘a divine woman’ who answers, *i.e.*, who utters words. Notice the polarities male *vs.* female, craft *vs.* discourse. If this is taken as a conscious choice, it would reflect the sophistication of the copyist (alternatively, it could convey a whiff of irony by the person who scribbled the second pair of lines). One wonders moreover whether the first pair of lines, speaking of ‘a man who by means of his art’ exhibits self-referentiality and self-consciousness, and thus whether the man alluded to is the scribe who demonstrates his art through the elaborate ligaturing of the first three letters of the word τέχνη (*téchnê*), *i.e.*, the technical term for ‘craft/field of expertise’, at the precise point where a stylistic and formal turn is about to be effected. On balance then it seems to me that the Homeric ostrakon from Deir el-Bahri may have served to demonstrate the expertise and sophistication of a copyist who worked across the board of writing styles.

⁴² Crihiore 2008: 42. ⁴³ Crihiore 2008: 43. ⁴⁴ Bucking 2012: 254.

⁴⁵ Crihiore 2008: 42 ‘unless we suppose that its writer changed his pen and altered his style to practice different ways of writing’.

⁴⁶ Bucking 2012, *passim*.

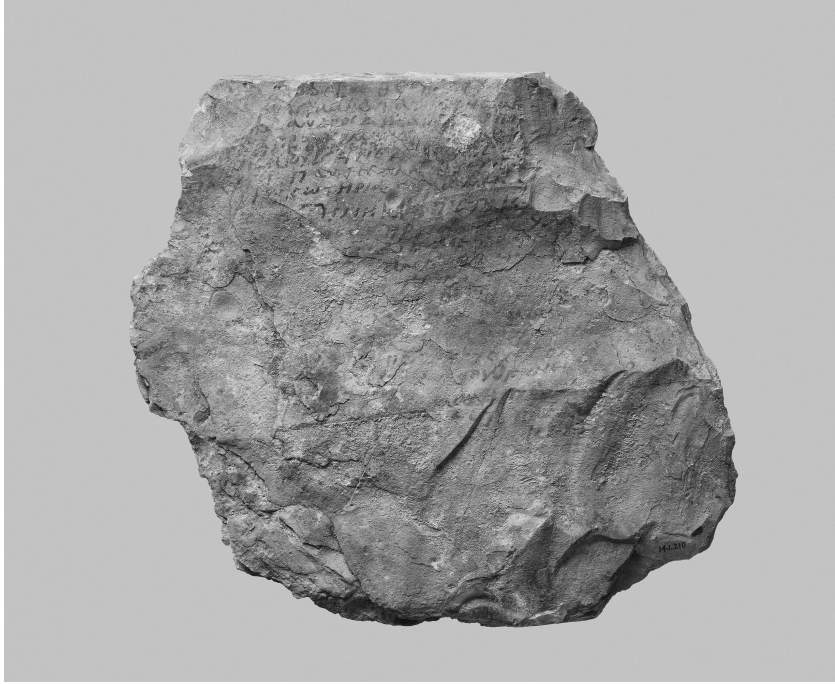


Figure 6.6 Sentences of Menander (*Mon.Epiph.* 615 = O.MMA. 14.1.210). The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1914, 14.1.210). © 2015 The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence

Menandri Sententiae in Epiphanius

I now return to the *topos* of Epiphanius to revisit the finds in outlying cell A. This cell has yielded a rich harvest of ostraca with Biblical, homiletic and liturgical texts in Coptic and in Greek,⁴⁷ including ostrakon *Mon.Epiph.* 615 (*Menandri Sententiae* in Greek), and papyrus *Mon.Epiph.* 621 (Greek part of a presumed bilingual list of birds, not arranged alphabetically),⁴⁸ and much private correspondence in Coptic. *Mon.Epiph.* 615 (Figure 6.6)⁴⁹ preserves a collection of single-verse maxims, traditionally ascribed to the comic poet Menander, although in practice their sources are diverse and their metre also exhibits a degree of variation. The writing surface is very uneven. The upper and lower edges of the stone have been cut in a straight line. The left and right parts are uneven and have suffered some damage,

⁴⁷ Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, 42, n. 1 '36 texts in the Biblical, Homiletical and Liturgical sections (Coptic and Greek). School pieces: 615, 621'.

⁴⁸ P.Rain.UnterrichtKopt. 247 = TM 65225.

⁴⁹ TM 61312; Cribiore 1996: 252, no. 319. No. XIII in Jaekel's Teubner edition of *Menandri Sententiae* (Jaekel 1964). See also CPF II.2 *Menandri Sententiae* no. 21 on pp. 167–78.

although not much of the writing surface is missing. The state of preservation of the text is poor. Some of the over thirty maxims have been deciphered and restored partly with the help of other sources. Four maxims all beginning with a word starting with the letter *alpha* open the collection, which continues with an average of three maxims per letter up to and including maxims in *theta*. From *iota* onwards one maxim per letter is the rule but two maxims starting with *phi* (ll. 27–8 and 28–9) may have been included.⁵⁰ The collection concludes with a maxim in *chi* (ll. 29–30) while the contents of the last line remain unclear.

Despite the considerable loss of text, it appears virtually certain that *Mon.Epiph.* 615 once contained a complete mini-collection of maxims arranged alphabetically. The hand appears neat (considering the uneven surface) with large, right-leaning letters penned in swift, confident strokes. As a whole it is an average specimen of the sloping, pointed majuscule. Criore considers it as ‘probably a teacher’s hand’ and includes the piece among the extant teachers’ models.⁵¹ This possibility cannot be definitely ruled out. However, the hand cannot be considered a sufficient criterion in this case as the artefact lacks other, more weighty indicators of models identified by Criore: for example, the text has not been recopied on the same surface in the hand of a learner.⁵² Other criteria need to be brought to bear on the discussion, more specifically the archaeological context, the form of the ostrakon and perhaps also its content.

The archaeological context has been discussed exhaustively by Scott Bucking.⁵³ This important discussion has yielded only modest insights, however. The piece was found with other ostraca and debris from the collapsing walls on a palm-leaf mat on the floor of the so-called ‘vestibule’.⁵⁴ It is unclear whether this was the original and common location of the ostraca in the room, whether they were dumped there when the cell was abandoned or whether they fell as a result of the collapse of the walls. There is a chance that this may not have been a ‘sealed locus’ since ostraca now in the British Museum (and therefore removed from the site before the MMA excavations) join with ostraca found on the mat. On the other hand, damage and ensuing random dispersal of pieces within the site may have been responsible for pieces which initially belonged together having ended up in different collections and may not mean

⁵⁰ On ll. 28–9 see Delattre 2012: 302. ⁵¹ Criore 1996: 124.

⁵² On the traits of teacher’s models, see Criore 1996: 124–8. ⁵³ Bucking 2007: 27–36.

⁵⁴ See editors’ commentary on *Mon.Epiph.* 3, p. 155; Bucking 2007: 29–30.

anything about the integrity of the lot on the mat of cell A.⁵⁵ The upshot of the discussion is that a considerable degree of uncertainty accompanies the archaeological side of the find.

What is certain, on the other hand, is that the cell was the *locus* of scribal activity. Some of the ostraca found together with *Mon.Epiph.* 615 were copied by a scribe identified, in the light of correspondence from the same deposit, as Moses.⁵⁶ The hand of *Mon.Epiph.* 615 is similar, albeit not identical, to Moses' hand. In its present state the ostrakon is ca. 22.5 cm broad and ca. 21 cm high. In its original dimensions it would have been somewhat broader (the original breadth may have been up to ca. 24 cm) than longer, its height amounting to ca. $\frac{3}{4}$ of a normal sheet of modern paper and its breadth somewhat exceeding one. As it was cut in a straight line below, it could have been set up so that the text could be viewed by someone from a distance in order to be read or copied. Yet the distance cannot have been greater than that from which letters of average size written on a normal sheet of paper would be visible. This is compatible with reading or copying taking place on an individual basis or in small groups. Moreover, an extensive interlinear addition of a forgotten maxim from the *beta*-group between ll. 4 and 5 makes the 'model' interpretation of *Mon.Epiph.* 615 appear as rather unlikely. Squeezed between lines, this addition caused a muddle and reduced legibility, a feature which appears more compatible with the assessment of this mini gnomologium as 'intended for personal use and reference'.⁵⁷

A final step is to explore whether content may reveal something about the user of this mini-gnomology. As the transmission of the *Menandri Sententiae* is fluid and formed *ad hoc*, as is the case with other types of apophthegmatic literature, the owner of this text may have been responsible for the selection of maxims. Beginnings are significant *loci* of self-positioning. This compiler/user has chosen to signpost the beginning (*Mon.Epiph.* 615.1) with a maxim concluding with φόβος θεοῦ ('the fear of God'). Whether an iambic adaptation of Proverbs 1:7 (as some scholars have assumed)⁵⁸ or, as proposed by Hagedorn and Weber,⁵⁹ a quotation of this OT passage reading ἀρχὴ σοφίας, φόβος θεοῦ ('the beginning of wisdom

⁵⁵ Bucking 2007: 30–1.

⁵⁶ The hand has copied *Mon.Epiph.* 3 (TM 108513), 7 (TM 108517), 8 (TM 108517), 15 (TM 108524), 16 (TM 108525), 19 (TM 108526), 31 (TM 108526), 32 (TM 112417), 46 (TM 112417), 47 (TM 112418), 68 (TM 112566) and 400 (a letter whose author identifies himself as Moses). See editors' note in *Mon.Epiph.* 3, p. 155.

⁵⁷ Bucking 2007: 35. ⁵⁸ *Mon.Epiph.* 63 Jaekel ἀρχὴν νόμιζε τὸν θεὸν † φοβεῖσθαι.

⁵⁹ Hagedorn and Weber 1968: 26 (comm. on ll. 1–3). The restoration was later proposed independently by Führer (1993: 14, n. 100) on grounds of space.

is the fear of God') – the programmatic maxim reveals a devout compiler/user with σοφία ('learning', 'erudition', 'wisdom') as a core value.⁶⁰

A *comparandum* is provided by the bilingual Greek and Coptic collection of *Menandri Sententiae* in a papyrus codex split between the Vatican Museum and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, that begins by quoting *Sophia Sirah* 25:24 (ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας 'sin originated in a woman') which encapsulates a core attitude running through the collection. As signalled by the opening maxim, the Vatican/Vienna bilingual gnomologium turns out to be replete with misogynistic maxims. This and considerations of space reinforce the possibility that the beginning of *Mon.Epiph.* 615 should be Proverbs 1:7.⁶¹

Predictably, maxims that stress the importance and prestige of learning predominate in *Mon.Epiph.* 615. Three maxims on the same topic follow immediately after the programmatic quotation: ll. 1–2 'learning is the best basis for wise/right thinking', ll. 2–3 'let *logos* guide every authority' and l. 4 'speak and learn eagerly the good things'. The topic re-emerges toward the end of the selection: ll. 22–3 'the learned person has a more developed sense/ability for reflection'; ll. 23–4 preserve a maxim that appears to compare learning with wealth (in what precise terms we do not know – wealth is held in high esteem in the gnomological tradition), followed by the unmetrical maxim ῥόπαλ[ον]||[γὰρ οὐδὲν τοῖς μαθοῦσι] τὰ γράμματα, 'no cudgel affects those who have learnt letters' or 'learning is no cudgel for those who have acquired it' (ll. 24–5).⁶² The main term for learning is γράμματα. This is a semantically broad noun designating 'literacy' (including the letters of the alphabet in the concrete sense, the ability to write and read, and the professions exercised by using the alphabet),⁶³ but also 'learning' and 'education' in a more general sense.⁶⁴ In their study of the bilingual Vatican/Vienna codex, Hagedorn and Weber consider the creation of the group of *sententiae* about γράμματα as secondary in relation to the core of the collection and attribute it to 'somebody lacking the correct idea as to the nature of an iambic trimeter'.⁶⁵ The crucial question is what this word means (or connotes) in a Late Antique Egyptian context, how it

⁶⁰ See Larsen 2013a for an alternate reading.

⁶¹ The use of excerpts from the Proverbs in Christian education is recommended by Basil of Caesarea (*Reg. fus.* 15), see Larsen 2013a: 63 (and n. 27) and Larsen this volume.

⁶² The restoration is Delattre's 2012: 301. The reconstruction of the text is mine on the basis of the digital image.

⁶³ E.g., in a sworn declaration *P.Tebt.* II 316.15–18 (99 CE), two young men, Demetrius, 23 years old, and Heliodorus, 18 years old, declare: τέχνη δὲ υμῶν (*l. ἡμῶν*) γράμματα ('we are scribes by profession').

⁶⁴ LSJ⁹ 1940: 358 s.v. γράμμα. ⁶⁵ Hagedorn and Weber 1968: 17.

was understood by the compiler/user of the present and similar collections, and what it reveals about their conception and experience of learning and education. As regards the Vatican/Vienna collection Hagedorn and Weber noted that the translator rendered the Greek γράμματα μαθάνειν or μαθεῖν as τῶν ἐκζαῖ or ἐνεκζαῖ, literally, ‘the teaching of writing’ (in other cases this expression corresponds to the Greek γράμματα διδάξαι [*grámmata didáksai* (‘to teach letters’)]).⁶⁶ While strictly speaking a misunderstanding on the part of the translator, the mistranslation may reflect the fact that he was an instructor/teacher who rendered the situation from his own point of view. More essentially, the rendering of γράμματα with ἐκζαῖ, i.e., a term which denotes literally the act of inscribing, drawing or forming the letters, appears intriguing and could be viewed as expressing the core of the translator’s educational ideal and experience. Based on her survey of extant material remains, Cribiore has suggested that in Coptic education ‘a beginner practiced writing before reading’.⁶⁷

To map the exact meanings and connotations of γράμματα in *Mon. Epiph.* 615, the content of the individual maxims should be taken into account. As it is, the concept is associated with φρονεῖν (‘correct thinking’), νοῦν (‘(good) sense’) and finally with πλοῦτος (‘wealth’) and the absence of compulsion or toil. All this points to ‘education’ as an apt meaning except for the last instance, which may also imply a conception of γράμματα as practical expertise/vocational training which generates material welfare.

The above reflections and possibilities are cast in a new light by a recently published ostrakon from the neighbouring hermitage of the scribe Frange (TT29), O.Frangé 751.⁶⁸ The large ostrakon (29 x 19 cm), which the editors have roughly dated to between the late sixth and the mid-eighth centuries in view of the archaeological context, is a sherd from a ribbed ceramic jar, pieced together from six fragments. The hand, which does not belong to Frange, displays a not yet fully developed writing skill (‘evolving hand’). Letters are mostly large and clumsily formed. Their shapes are not fully stabilised and neither is their size. The text consists of a chain of maxims. It opens with what seems to me to be part of Proverbs 1:7 (O.Frangé 751.1 [ἀ]ρχὴ σοφί[ας] φῶβ[ος θεοῦ]).⁶⁹ It continues with two maxims from *Menandri Sententiae*, the first starting with *alpha* (O.Frangé 751.1–3 = *889 Pernigotti) and the second with *beta*

⁶⁶ Crum 1939: 381–2, s.v. ἐκζαῖ. ⁶⁷ Cribiore 1999: 284 (and n. 43).

⁶⁸ TM 220289. *Ed. pr.* Boud’hors and Heurtel 2010: I 396. See also CPF II.2 137–8 (*Menandri Sententiae* no. 11). For a recent discussion and revision of the ostrakon, see Maravela 2016.

⁶⁹ *Ed. pr.* [.].ν σοφία φ.[. . .

(O.Frangé 751.4–5 = 115 Pernigotti). These are also found in ll. 1–2 and 4–5 of *Mon.Epiph.* 615 as well as in other witnesses of *Menandri Sententiae* from Egypt in Late Antiquity.⁷⁰ Lines 6–8 of O.Frangé 751 contain Matt. 25:13, functioning as a maxim which starts with *gamma* (γρηγορεῖτε ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε| τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδ' [ἐ] τὴν| ὥραν ['be watchful for you do not know the day nor the hour']). It is followed by a maxim starting with *delta* (O. Frangé 751.9–10 = *902 Pernigotti), which corresponds to the maxim in *Mon.Epiph.* 615.11, P.Bour. 1.178–80 and P.Copt. 85. Lines 12–14 of O. Frangé 751 contain the documentary version of the Trinitarian formula ἐν ὀνόματι πατρὸς| καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πν|εύματος ('in [the] name of [the] father and son and holy spirit'),⁷¹ which apparently functions as a maxim starting with *epsilon*. O.Frangé 751 is then related to *Mon.Epiph.* 615 in view of the shared opening maxim and another three shared sentences. On the other hand, it also differs starkly as its compiler opts for pious pronouncements, a New Testament passage on the significance of spiritual alertness where *Mon.Epiph.* 615 has maxims about women, and the Trinitarian formula. The scribe of O.Frangé 751 then (or the person who asked the scribe to copy the maxims) picks, perhaps from memory, from a source shared with *Mon.Epiph.* 615 but his strong religious-moral focus leads him to insert Biblical passages where the source did not provide suitable content. All the while the scribe struggles with the letter forms, and his errors in phonology and word division suggest that he is also struggling with Greek. Writing practice and improvement in Greek with a religious-moral agenda seem to be the keywords that describe the *Sitz im Leben* of this new ostrakon.

O.Frangé 751 likewise has significance for the assessment of *Mon.Epiph.* 615 in the sense that it clearly strengthens the educational scenario. Writing practice and religious-moral exercise emerge as joint factors determining the use of gnomologies in monastic settings.⁷² At any rate the text has entirely lost its connections with its pagan origins⁷³ and functions as a culturally rebranded manual of practical, personal ethics.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ O.Frangé 751.1–3 is also attested in P.Bour. 1.169–70 (IV); T.Würz. K 1023 (IV/V); T.Louvre AF 1195 side A (V); and T.Uni.Mich. inv. 29974 inner text (V/VI). O.Frangé 751.4–5 is also attested in P.Bour. 1.171–2 and P.Copt. 31–2.

⁷¹ Bagnall and Worp 2004: 99–109, esp. 100–1, 103–4 and 108.

⁷² Cf. Larsen 2013a; and others.

⁷³ Perhaps then, given the monastic setting, one should not supplement with Jaekel [ἵσον θεοῖς but ἴσον θεῷ in l. 17.

⁷⁴ For an interesting *comparandum*, the Christian assimilation of Pythagorean doctrines via the second-century gnomological *Sentences of Sextus*, see Pevarello 2013 and Pevarello in this volume.

Perspectives from the Petrie Ostraca

The recent publication of two archives of ostraca in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London⁷⁵ may illuminate the discussion from new angles. One lot of ostraca, designated as Group A, comprises predominantly Christian texts (Psalms, Acts, different NT epistles, two liturgical prayers), as well as three ostraca with excerpts from *Iliad* 1 and six ostraca with *Menandri Sententiae*. All these appear to have been penned by the same hand (A) that has written some Coptic documents, an excerpt from 1 Ep.Jo. in Coptic and a couple of texts which cannot be identified with certainty.⁷⁶ The most likely provenance is the wider area of Western Thebes. Given the date of the find (late fifth century) and the history of the area, it may be conjectured that these texts – which predate the Epiphanius and St Phoebammon texts by at least half a century – may represent a cache of monastic texts, although this is not absolutely secure. The mix of texts in the archive at any rate corresponds to what has been recovered in the Monastery of Epiphanius, including the presence of excerpts from the *Iliad* and selections from *Menandri Sententiae*. The hand has been described as a ‘fluid, practiced hand, though not a pure bookhand’ and as ‘an upright semi-bookhand (...) no doubt a hand practiced in copying texts for common use’.⁷⁷ The inconsistent use of punctuation, *trema* and other lectional aids (e.g., apostrophe to mark elision) as well as the semi-calligraphic hand probably indicate copies produced privately and intended for private use. Multiple reproductions of the same excerpt could point to a school (or to copies commissioned to the same scribe).⁷⁸ However, no overlap is verifiable between the ostraca with *Menandri Sententiae*. The only possible overlap is between O.Petr.Mus. 32 (*Il.* 1.128–34) and 33 (*Il.* 1.128–33?), but the latter object is in a bad state of preservation and its testimony cannot be decisive.

The Christian section of the archive comprises excerpts from the Acts as well as from the Pauline and the Catholic Epistles and an ostrakon with two liturgical prayers. Significant variants, unattested in the rest of the manuscript transmission, point to an oral *Sitz im Leben*, as the editor has argued. The variants, e.g., ἡμεῖς ἀγαπητοί (‘we, beloved ones’) in P.Petr.Mus. 15 r.9 (= 1 Ep.Jo. 3:21) instead of a simple ἀγαπητοί (‘beloved ones’) or ἀδελφοί

⁷⁵ O.Petr.Mus. I (2012). Preliminary publications in Funghi and Martinelli 2003, Römer 2003, Funghi and Martinelli 2008, Römer 2008.

⁷⁶ O.Petr.Mus. I, 3–4. ⁷⁷ Römer 2003: 184, and Funghi and Martinelli 2003: 144, respectively.

⁷⁸ See the copies of the same prayer, *Mon.Epiph.* 46 and 47, produced by Moses.

(‘brothers’) in the manuscript transmission, and possibly ἡμεῖς ἀδελφοί ([‘we, brothers’] instead of ἀγαπητοί [‘beloved ones’]) in 15 v.1 (= 1 Ep.Jo. 4.1), suggest that the texts were delivered orally for an audience, i.e., learnt by heart and used in preaching.⁷⁹ The presence of Homer and of *Menandri Sententiae* in this frame has rightly been explained as pools of maxims to be drawn upon in connection with moral oral instruction.⁸⁰ These texts were thus transfused into Christian and monastic environments as sources of moral learning imparted through self-education and in turn oral instruction of others – fellow monks and above all, novices.

Concluding Remarks

The Monastery of Epiphanius has long been the only properly documented monastic site in the region of Western Thebes, and it was only natural that the finds there have featured prominently in discussions of the relationship between school and monastery and of the fate of the Classical *paideia* within the monastic walls. The situation, however, is changing fast. Other, larger monastic sites in the area are being excavated or revisited and the publication of new school texts in Greek and in Coptic has been announced,⁸¹ while prepublications of new monastic ‘school texts’ have already generated much discussion.⁸² Their publications will bring the issues raised in this paper once more onto centre stage.

The present discussion of evidence for Classical *paideia* and typical educational texts in a Greek setting in monastic and similar milieus in Upper Egypt in Late Antiquity has suggested some leads and ideas to be revisited, and perhaps eventually revised, when more texts and archaeological reports become available. As expected in a setting where Coptic was the dominant linguistic medium and Christianity the dominant religion, the presence of Classical Greek *paideia* is meagre. The most famous and influential poet of Greek Antiquity, Homer, penetrated the boundaries of the Upper Egyptian monasteries

⁷⁹ Römer 2003: 184–90. ⁸⁰ Römer 2003: 189.

⁸¹ Texts from Deir el-Bachit, among them schools texts, are edited by S. Hodak (see Burkard, Mackensen and Polz 2003: 61–4; Beckh, Eichner and Hodak 2011: 20–6). The edition of the Coptic school texts in Columbia Deir el-Bahri/St Phoebammon is being carried out by R. Cribiore and J. Cromwell.

⁸² Zauzich 2002–2003; Dieleman 2010; Menci 2010–2011.

not as literature but as a repository of famous and memorable verses to be used in connection with the writing exercises of educated copyists active in the monastic community. The gnomological collection *Menandri Sententiae*, nominally going back to the comic poet Menander and other representatives of Greek dramatic poetry, functions as a pool of sayings to be drawn upon for writing practice and (oral?) moral instruction. In my opinion, the features of these texts suggest that they are not necessarily connected with the education of the youth who came under the authority of the Western Theban monasteries (through, e.g., child donations attested for the nearby Monastery of St Phoebammon). In and of themselves they likewise probably contribute nothing decisive to the discussion of whether children who grew up in Western Theban monasteries received an education.⁸³ It seems far more likely that the forms of education indicated were directed at adults, fellow monks, perhaps in particular novices.⁸⁴ Therefore as the discussion concerning the meeting between Christianity and school is picking up speed,⁸⁵ the use of the term 'educational texts' instead of 'school texts' may be preferable.

In addressing some of these texts and their settings, Scott Bucking proposed that we should allow for the possibility of multifunctionality of the texts, i.e., that some of these texts may have had more than one use.⁸⁶ Valuable as the point is, I wonder whether the multifunctionality of certain persons (and of the spaces they inhabited) provides a more efficient key to describe the situation in the monasteries and the production of the relevant texts. While in the context of the Greek pagan and urban education the teacher was mainly a teacher, in Christian monasteries the educated members of the community (figures like Moses who inhabited cell A of the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius, situated so as to be freely and easily accessible whether one approached from the town or from the direction of Deir el-Bahri)⁸⁷ would take on different roles depending on needs and would function as copyists of books or of documents, as teachers (of their fellow-monks, especially the novices) or as preachers. The plausibility of this

⁸³ No provision for the education of the children is made in the child donation acts, see P.KRU 78–103. The evidence for the presence and position of children in Egyptian monasteries is discussed in Giorda 2017.

⁸⁴ See Bucking 2007: 38–9.

⁸⁵ Overview and discussion of Christian educational papyri in Carlig 2013.

⁸⁶ Bucking 2007: 35–6. ⁸⁷ Crum, *et al.* 1926: I, pl. II.

scenario is indirectly underpinned by the semantics of the Coptic noun ⲥⲁⲗ ('wise person') which bring together roles that presuppose literacy with roles that involve orality.⁸⁸ It remains to test its validity in the light of the documentary evidence and literary accounts about Egyptian monastics.

⁸⁸ Crum 1939: 383–4, s.v. ⲥⲁⲗ.

PART III



Grammar and Rhetoric

7 | The School of Didymus the Blind in Light of the Tura Find

BLOSSOM STEFANIW

Didymus the Blind (ca. 313–98) was not who we thought he was, nor did he do what we thought he did.¹ Traditionally, Didymus has been portrayed as the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, appointed by Bishop Athanasius and occupied with instructing converts and baptismal candidates in the rudiments of Christian doctrine.² However, the type of teaching we can observe unfolding in the transcripts from his lessons, which were uncovered in the Tura find of 1941, is not something we ever considered to be among the plausible alternatives for a Christian

¹ I wish to express my thanks to the host team and participants of the workshops on Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia* and on Pre-Monastic Schools in Alexandria, whose comments and questions, particularly those of Ed Watts, led my research in a new direction. I am also greatly indebted to my assistant, Elisabeth Engler-Starck, who worked to organize the very large and unwieldy body of evidence connected to the 300 student questions in the Tura Papyri. The research leave necessary for writing up this project was funded by the German Research Council. Continuing research on Didymus the Blind as a grammarian is being supported by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

² “Didymus Catechist of Alexandria” (Allen 1704: 440); “Didymus, dem gelehrten Vorsteher der Katechetenschule zu Alexandria” (Neander 1830: 337); “Didymos [wurde] von Athanasius zum Leiter der Katechetenschule in Alexandria ernannt” (Bienert 1972: 5); “Athanasius appointed Didymus to lead the catechetical school in Alexandria” (Ferguson 1990: 329). More recently, Richard Layton has characterized Didymus as the head of a scholastic study circle composed of ascetic Christians, which is a great advance on the traditional construal of Didymus. Layton characterizes the “circle” of Didymus as a group of Christian ascetic scholars committed to fortifying Christian identity in a competitive religious landscape and engaged in scholasticism, i.e., study that is aimed at the “consolidation of tradition rather than expansion into new frontiers” using “a shared method of inquiry exercised by the participants of an enduring educational community . . . occupied with securing the rational foundations of a received authoritative tradition” (Layton 2004: 5 and 7). Prior to Layton’s study, in an unpublished dissertation entitled *The Classroom of Didymus the Blind*, University of Michigan, 1995, Anne Browning Nelson concluded that the lessons were not directed at “mere catechetes,” but since her focus was on analysis of the classroom itself, she offered no definite characterization of where Didymus fit in the broader educational landscape of his time. Browning Nelson describes the students of Didymus as “interested in numerology and grammar and the differences between literal and anagogic exegesis” and as “not mere catechumens, for whom such subjects as philosophy, rhetoric, and logic would have been inappropriate” (Browning Nelson 1995: 181–2). Browning Nelson characterizes the school overall as the fourth-century version of a Christian university (1995: 8). Most recently, Grant Bayliss has described Didymus’ pedagogical program as “virtue Origenism” (Bayliss 2015). The current study insists on using native categories to analyze the Tura Papyri and objects to the invention of categories, whether virtue Origenism or fourth-century scholasticism, with only one member.

intellectual in fourth-century Alexandria.³ The evidence from the Tura Papyri indicates that Didymus was a grammarian.⁴ His pedagogical work was not to instruct catechumens in Christian doctrine, but rather to facilitate the attachment of young people to the mores and affect appropriate to respectable citizens. That is, Didymus was doing the same cultural work that every other grammarian was doing.⁵

The connection of Didymus the Blind to fourth-century Egyptian monasticism has often been discussed on the basis of the early historiographical record. For example, Richard Layton differentiates earlier and later attempts to associate Didymus with the authority of Antony (as portrayed by Bishop Athanasius) over against more suspect intellectualist forms of monasticism. He calls attention to the fact that Rufinus and Palladius make much of approving visits to Didymus by Antony the Great, while emphasizing his loyalty to the Nicene cause championed by Athanasius – thus identifying him as the right sort of monk.⁶ Grant Bayliss locates Didymus in ascetic circles in Alexandria and characterizes his pedagogical program as focused on the development of virtue, which was of course also a primary ascetic goal.⁷ What has not been attempted previously, however, is the characterization of Didymus' role in Egyptian monasticism on the basis of the history of the Tura Papyri, their transmission, preservation, copying, and use. The papyri were found near the monastery of Sts. Arsenius and John Kolobos. Assuming that it was the resident Greek-speaking monks and not nearby farmers or passersby

³ The find includes more than 2,000 pages, primarily from five commentaries by Didymus. The commentaries on Psalms and Ecclesiastes include student questions and have not been edited down from the stenographical notes from which they originated, although they are in longhand and have thus been edited “up,” so to speak, from the presumed original shorthand. Based on internal references to Eunomians, Apollinarians, and Arians, the composition of the commentaries can be dated to within a rough twenty-five-year period ending before 390. See the detailed argument for this view in Layton 2004: 6–7.

⁴ This characterization of Didymus is easy to align with ancient portrayals of his life and work, but was obscured by modern Western scholarship which assumed catechesis was limited to religious instruction. Ancient sources characterize Didymus as part of the milieu of learned ascetics, associating him with Antony (Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 4) and emphasizing the diverse subjects that he had mastered. Theodoret (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26) counts “poetry, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, the logic of Aristotle, and the eloquence of Plato” and Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 109) counts dialectics and geometry. Rufinus (*Hist. eccl.* 2.7) likewise lists mathematics, astronomy, geometry, and logic as subjects that Didymus taught. See also Sozomen (*Hist. eccl.* 3.15) and Socrates Scholasticus (*Hist. eccl.* 4.25). While admired for his asceticism, Didymus does not appear to have lived in any of the monastic settlements near Alexandria, nor in a closed monastery, but to have been among the ascetics who remained in the city and practiced asceticism in a domestic context.

⁵ This is not to say that he may not also have offered catechetical instruction, but that the only record of his pedagogical work does not represent catechetical instruction.

⁶ Layton 2004: 14–23. ⁷ Bayliss 2015: 27–8.

who owned and eventually discarded the papyri, two questions present themselves. What were the monks using these texts for? How did the papyri get from Tura to Alexandria?

Neither question is particularly difficult to answer. Recent rethinking of emergent monasticism suggests that monks traveled a fair amount.⁸ As such it is not implausible that a yet to be identified and/or anonymous monk conveyed Didymus' writings upriver from Alexandria, or that the manuscripts reached Tura in a now untraceable passage from monastery to monastery, over an indefinite period of time. Among the monks represented in the tradition, however, one particular individual is noted for having moved through Alexandria to Tura. Authoritative enough to have had a monastery named after him, he is also portrayed in the narrative sources as having the resources to own 2,000 pages of papyri.⁹ This was the monk Arsenius (ca. 354–449).

Across a range of narrative sources, Arsenius is described as a Roman aristocrat who lived for some time in Constantinople, from around 383 to 395. Although some accounts say this period extended to forty years, scholars suggest twelve as a more probable duration. In narrative recountings Arsenius is associated with the Emperor's court and purported to have instructed his sons in grammar.¹⁰ He is thought to have come to Alexandria in 394, shortly before Didymus' death. If one frames a hypothetical trajectory by synthesizing these points, Arsenius could have purchased or been given the papyri during his time in Alexandria before he settled in Sketis.¹¹ As the story is told, after forty years in Sketis, Arsenius faced the destruction of the monastic settlement there by Libyan tribes.¹² Having decamped with his disciples, he spent a few years in Canopus near Alexandria before settling in Tura. It is believed that the monastery, named in his honor and in honor of his teacher John Kolobos, was built at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century.¹³ If the papyri were among the original artifacts taken into the monastery at the time of its foundation, they (and their copies) may have remained there for as long as 100 years before disposal.

⁸ I refer here to the as yet unpublished conference paper by Paula Jean Tutty, "Monastic Mobility and Intercommunication in Late Antique Egypt," given in Oslo, 2015, at a conference on "The Nag Hammadi Codices as Monastic Books."

⁹ See, for example, the numerous apophthegms that depict this individual's wealth and access to "creature comforts" as a point of tension within the communities in which he resided: cf. Larsen 2013b.

¹⁰ Evelyn White 1932: 123.

¹¹ Evelyn White 1932: 123, 160–3 notes several dates at which Arsenius was present in Alexandria for shorter periods (407, 444), of which 394 is the earliest, so it can be counted as his arrival in Egypt.

¹² Evelyn White 1932: 162–3.

¹³ Koenen and Müller-Wiener 1968: 41–63, 50. Eutychius (*PG* 111, 1028) states that Arcadius built the monastery of the tomb of his tutor, but Arcadius had already died in 408.

The physical transposition of the Tura lesson transcripts remains simultaneously a mundane and a profound act. On the surface, transmission is merely a matter of moving from one place to the next, with one's possessions in tow. Within the larger framework of the interweaving of Roman and monastic, literary and pedagogical patrimony, the migration of the papyri is also a process of transferring cultural capital from urban center to periphery. As Rome fell and Sketis was destroyed, the papyri moved with, and as, refugees. In the process they facilitated the creation of new cultural centers in monasteries far from Rome. In this, the Tura Papyri represent not only the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next through pedagogy, but also transmission of Roman and early monastic knowledge into a Christian future, mediated not solely through medieval Europe (as has customarily been supposed), but at a primary level, through Egyptian monasticism (more traditionally framed as a "missing chapter in the history of education").¹⁴

If one situates the pedagogical content of the Tura Papyri within this frame, Didymus did neither what we scholars have supposed it proper and possible for a Christian teacher to do, nor what contemporary authorities thought he should do. Athanasius was pushing an anti-intellectualist, back-to-Eden ideal of Christianity, and Emperor Julian had recently invited Christian teachers to remove themselves to the churches of the Galileans rather than teach from texts in which they did not believe.¹⁵ Didymus took Julian's advice, but not as it was intended: he expounded Scripture in a school rather than a church and did so in such a way that intellectual engagement with Scripture became the new basis of *Romanitas*, thus contesting the role of the pagan literary canon. Didymus did not take Athanasius' advice either, but instead cultivated Christian young people who would be equipped to take up leadership roles in the social mainstream of urban society. The larger significance of the fact that he did this work on the basis of various books of the Bible, and not, according to tradition, on the basis of the works of Homer, Hesiod, or Menander, will be discussed in full in the final section of this essay. It will be argued that Didymus was negotiating a relationship for Christian young people to their literary patrimony, and, by making them the object of school lessons, calling on Christian Scriptures to deliver knowledge appropriate to a good citizen.

¹⁴ Rappe 2001; cf. Larsen, 2013a.

¹⁵ See the discussion of the role of this edict in the context of contemporary arguments around imperial and ecclesial authority in Elm 2012: 141–3.

On the surface, one might look at Didymus as a grammarian and see only a matter of form and content: Didymus used traditional forms of grammatical instruction, but taught Christian content. This is a perspective which obscures both the nature of ancient grammatical instruction and the true scope of what Didymus was attempting in making Christian books the object of grammatical study. The “content” of grammatical study is not the content of the books as the basis of the lessons. It is a particular relation of person to text, of young citizen to the literary patrimony, and thereby of future to past. Didymus taught exactly that content, as we will see in the following analysis. There is no separation of form and content in grammatical instruction.

Catherine Chin has analyzed the link between the textual practices typical of a grammarian’s classroom and the practices proper to religion, stating that “the conventions of the discipline of grammar transformed linguistic work into incipient religious practice.” By learning to treat texts as grammarians treat them, privileged young people studying with grammarians were being inducted into a religious world in which those texts deserved such attention, study, and reverence because of their place in an authoritative literary tradition.¹⁶ It is that role of the text as a cherished object of study which makes Didymus’ replacement of Homer and Hesiod with certain books of the Bible so radical. Of course the Bible was already an object of reverence for Christians, but by making it the occasion for grammatical study, Didymus made it an object of reverence *on the same terms* that Homer had been, and still was, revered by the larger society.

The manner in which this is accomplished requires attention: grammatical study is addressed 1) to the younger generation 2) who are undergoing a process of training and development 3) by means of repetitive engagement 4) with a revered object from the cultural past 5) whose quality and whose potential to improve the reader are the true object of engagement and are simultaneously 6) the argument for its own valorization, but which are never stated in deference to 7) the practice of engagement and its constant rehearsal. All of these factors of grammatical instruction combined put the teaching and learning of grammar in a strategic position for navigating the relationship of the future (the younger generation being taught) to the past (the inherited literary patrimony being studied), and in doing so articulating and rehearsing the moral direction of the community, the city, and the Empire. By making Christian texts the object

¹⁶ Chin 2008: 1–2.

of grammatical study, Didymus made Christian texts the basis for knowledge of the universal and the properly Roman.

In short, grammatical study was a means of placing a text or group of texts in a key cultural position: such texts were treated as deposits of the universal, of all that is valuable and worthwhile. Texts which were the object of grammatical study also play a key role in locating those who engage with them in a historical and cultural lineage: the reader was connected to the past, in that he or she received and was put in relationship to the moral and literary patrimony passed down through ancient texts. The reader was simultaneously fitted out for a future which had the same shape as that patrimony, a future which was judged and structured according to the same ethic as discerned in the text, which required the same virtues and condemned the same vices. As Chin puts it, grammar is motivated by “the sense that grammatical work salvages what it can from disaster . . . a kind of rearguard action against the advances of time, opinion, or contrary social interest.”¹⁷ Without requiring young people to spend time reading and engaging with these texts, the mores proper to respectable citizens would be reduced to the contingent. Studying texts from the past stabilized the present and ensured the future. Didymus’ replacement of Homer with the Bible meant that the very guarantor of civilization was replaced. The past was now a Christian past, and the future and its citizens would be Christian.

Didymus can be recognized as a grammarian on the basis of an examination of the lesson transcripts included in the Tura Papyri. These papyri were uncovered by the British army during their campaign in Egypt in the Second World War.¹⁸ These transcripts consist of small passages of Scripture, about half a verse at a time, followed by extemporaneous

¹⁷ Chin 2008: 3.

¹⁸ The first reports on the find can be found in Guéraud 1946: 85–108; Puech 1951: 293–329 and Doutreleau 1955: 161–93. The report by Puech describes the papyri as having been uncovered in the rubble collected in the angle between the floor and the wall of a passage coming off a larger room. The find included texts by Origen as well as an anonymous commentary. These circumstances, along with the fact that the manuscripts had been divested of their bindings and other reusable components with proper bookmaker’s tools and deposited without any protective container, suggest that they were dumped, not cached. It is plausible, though not conclusively demonstrable, that the decision to dump them had something to do with the Origenist controversy and occurred in response to the condemnation of Origen and Didymus at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. Cf. Layton 2004: 2–3, who concurs with Koenen 1968 in interpreting the find as showing evidence of deliberate efforts aimed at mutilating and destroying the texts.

commentary by Didymus. At irregular intervals, Didymus stopped for questions, or the students interrupted. Then the next part of the verse was read and the explanation continued. These works have generally been understood as exegetical studies, and that is not strictly incorrect, but their aim was not primarily to define the meaning of the text under discussion. Rather, the text was engaged in an elaborately centrifugal manner such that it reached out towards the whole scope of inherited knowledge. This mode of engagement was not designed to teach mere names and facts and rules; it demonstrated and reinforced how the students should relate to their literary patrimony. Thus, the “interpretation” of the Psalms includes material on logic, dialectic, mathematics, zoology, and numerology.

An examination of the lesson transcripts,¹⁹ concentrated around the questions from students included there, shows that Didymus used the same methods and introduced the same subject matter as any other grammarian of his day.²⁰ This can be established by comparing three key characteristics of any such educational endeavor with the evidence for secondary education in late Roman Egypt gleaned from both literary and papyrological evidence.²¹ These points of comparison are 1) the level of difficulty, 2) the subjects covered, and 3) the logistics of education as revealed by some suggestive circumstantial evidence. In addition, the more complex question of the mode of instruction will be analyzed and compared. This study will proceed by first summarizing our knowledge of late Roman grammarians working in Egypt on each of these points. Then the evidence from the Tura Papyri will be set out in order to

¹⁹ In order to diagnose what sort of teaching Didymus was doing, I focused on the 300 student questions which are preserved in the lesson transcripts. The questions were assessed according to two different frameworks. The first framework sorted the questions according to the topic, that is, the academic discipline, mustered in the answer. The second framework sorted the questions according to degree of difficulty. In the process of thus assessing the questions, I also collected circumstantial evidence which presented itself. Translations of shorter passages throughout this essay are my own. Longer excerpts, set off in blocks, are from Browning Nelson 1995.

²⁰ It should be noted that the questions included in the commentaries on the Psalms and Ecclesiastes are authentic questions from actual students and not formulaic queries inserted by the author to move a systematic treatise forward. The student questions frequently reflect the inelegance of real classrooms, whether ordinary misunderstandings or inattention or efforts to recover from a digression. They are often also taken in batches, as if at a pause in Didymus' explanations or at the end of a section. In at least two instances, it appears that there is a lively discussion with quick back-and-forth between Didymus and the students (*EccI*T 6.5–7.26; *PsT* 221.25–226.17).

²¹ The model of secondary education in late Roman Egypt on which I base my comparison is that generated by the papyrological research of Raffaella Cribiore, as collected in the monograph study Cribiore 2001. Cf. Cribiore 1996; Morgan 1998; Snyder 2000.

establish that given the topics, academic level, and mode of instruction, taken along with certain circumstantial points of classroom logistics, Didymus is a grammarian. Since laying to rest the notion that there was a catechetical school in Alexandria requires a survey of several centuries of historiography along with a philological study, that task will be left for a separate publication.²² The present study is concerned only with establishing that Didymus was a grammarian and interpreting the significance of that state of affairs for our model of how asceticism, education, and religious identity fit together in late antique Alexandria. While I concur with the established observation that Christian scholars used the same methods as their non-Christian peers, I argue that Didymus not only applied the reading practices acquired in his own education in order to write commentaries, but imparted the grammarian's typical techniques and reading skills to students in a classroom setting, so that it is accurate to say not just that he used grammarians' methods but that he was a practicing grammarian.

The Academic Level of Grammatical Instruction in Late Roman Egypt and in the Tura Papyri

The work of the grammarian took place on an intermediate level between the remedial literacy skills acquired in elementary education and advanced tertiary education in rhetoric or philosophy.²³ The majority of students did not continue to the secondary level and would stop after attaining basic literacy.²⁴ Because of its intermediate position, the unsystematic nature of educational customs in Late Antiquity, and because grammatical instruction took place over the course of several years of increasing sophistication, a grammarian's classroom could include a very wide range of levels. In general, instruction was aimed at equipping the students with more refined skills for engaging with texts. At the outset of the course of study, the grammarian had to move the student beyond what might still be quite

²² It may suffice here to note that contemporary and other late antique historiographers did not refer to Didymus as a teacher of catechesis, but rather as ὁ συγγραφεὺς ("the composer/compiler"; Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 4.1; Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26), ἀνὴρ θαυμαστός καὶ ἐλλόγιμος ("a wondrous and notable man"; Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 25.1), and *scholae ecclesiasticae doctor* ("a doctor of ecclesiastical learning"; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* 2.7).

²³ For an account of elementary education in late Roman Egypt, see Cribiore 2001: 160–84. For evidence of elementary education in Christian ascetic contexts, see Larsen 2013a and 2013b.

²⁴ The very apt term "patrimony" to characterize the relation of students to the cultural heritage passed on to them through study with a grammarian comes from Cribiore 2001: e.g., 188.

remedial literacy skills; some individuals would have completed elementary schooling only up to a level where they could merely work out which words the letters spelled out.²⁵ Over the course of study, the student of a grammarian gained more privileged and more articulated access to the textual world which was her/his inheritance. A grammarian taught how to analyze parts of speech, how to identify the speaker of a given passage, how to consider etymologies, how to relate different parts of the text to one another, and how to compare textual variations. Grammatical training made the difference between being merely literate and having a viable level of textual competence. But it also served a more complex cultural function: grammatical training constituted initiation into a relationship with highly esteemed texts and thereby with the mainstream elite. Grammatical education was of an intermediate and broad academic level, it was a gateway to the highest and most central social level, something that even minor public figures would have in common with their local governors, urban bishops, and the aristocracy.

Much in keeping with the broad range of level typical of the grammarian's classroom, the lessons of Didymus the Blind included both remedial and advanced topics. On the one hand, there was instruction on grammatical basics, such as differentiating singular and plural, identifying mass nouns, or understanding the difference between indicative and imperative.²⁶ One student, for example, requested an explanation of the difference between ἐπὶ ("on") and ἐν ("in").²⁷ On the other hand, the lessons also addressed more challenging material, such as using the categories of essence and quality to work out whether Job was a righteous man.²⁸ A closer examination of the lessons on Psalms and Ecclesiastes respectively can provide a fairly clear picture of the level of the students in Didymus' classroom.

A large proportion of the student questions reflect the concerns of beginners. The most basic and most frequent questions were requests for

²⁵ Crihiore 2001: 189. ²⁶ *EccT* 348.11–12.

²⁷ *PsT* 210.32–3: "What is the difference between 'about the Lord' and 'in the Lord'?" Similarly *EccT* 70.2: "Isn't 'die' the same as 'kill'?" (ἀποθανεῖν/ἀποκτείνειν). This effort to differentiate related words is typical of the work of the grammarian and appropriate to the transition even of native speakers from oral to written language use. As Crihiore 2001: 189–92 notes, while Quintilian suggests that a boy should go straight to the grammarian as soon as he was properly literate, actually engaging with a text in an analytical way is an advanced reading skill that new students of a grammarian would initially struggle with.

²⁸ *PsT* 222.15–29.

clarification or queries directed at eliciting a definition or an explanation of a certain term in the verse under discussion. These basic questions started with τὸ (“what”), as in τὸ πάσα σοφία (“what is all wise”)? Sometimes the students were asking for clarification of a phrase just to stay on track. For example, one student requested that Didymus go back to the phrase “like the cedars of Lebanon” in Psalm 36 and another said, “Explain: ‘in the good days’.”²⁹ Another reflects interest in the standard exegetical step of identifying the speaker (πρόσωπον) of a certain passage, and asked, “Is another person speaking here?” to which Didymus replied that the phrase in question was spoken by either the Holy Spirit or the author.³⁰

Sometimes the students revealed their naiveté and inexperience by asking about things that are irrelevant, as when it comes to the Psalm about the deer thirsty for water. When Didymus explained that deer get thirsty when they have eaten poisonous snakes, the student became concerned about precisely what kind of snakes the deer eat.³¹ This suggests a certain unfamiliarity with engaging literary texts: the student did not know whether it matters which kind of snake the deer in the text ate, just as a college freshman might look at a painting by Vermeer, not notice the light or the domestic subject, and wonder instead why women are wearing hats in the house.

In contrast to this, the papyri also register more sophisticated questions, which reveal that the students were better oriented to the vocabulary of study and more able to engage the text using the traditional set of tools, again much as we have all observed the diverse preoccupations and idiosyncratic vocabularies of college freshmen shaking down over time into the common humanities-speak proper to their studies.³² Such more discourse-secure student behavior can be seen in the early lessons on Ecclesiastes, which start with a sequence of four complex questions

²⁹ *PsT* 256.17 and *EccIT* 212.25.

³⁰ *PsT* 336.26–337.2. Others among the numerous instances of queries aimed at identifying the speaker can be found in *PsT* 298.26, *PsT* 293.13, *PsT* 306.7, and *PsT* 308.22. Layton 2004: 26 discusses this and other traditional methods of textual study.

³¹ Question: “What kind of snakes?” Answer: “Of all poisonous snakes of the entire class of snakes, or I should say, their entire genus” (*PsT* 296.26).

³² Layton 2004: 26 asserts “Didymus applies the same tools employed by any grammarian of the time,” and lists the identification of the speaker (πρόσωπον), attention to customary usage (συνήθεια), and attention to literary and rhetorical devices as well as formal issues like punctuation and verse and chapter divisions. It is striking that while this common methodology is noted, Layton does not draw the conclusion that Didymus is a grammarian, but rather that “His use of these exegetical instruments would be expected . . . of any teacher of Scripture.” (Layton 2004).

revealing the students' increasing mastery. The questions were accorded correspondingly complex answers. In response to the observation by a student that the author might be taken to be repetitious, Didymus delivered a summary of the difference between the visible and invisible (sensible and intelligible) realms and how to recognize teachings on each. This led to the following three questions in which the students relate what Didymus explained back to the text they were studying and inquire whether the Ecclesiast might not be referring to the intelligible world enigmatically. Here we see a group of students who have passed through the "Intro to Textual Studies" course and are participating very competently in the senior seminar.³³ In these more advanced lessons, the students frequently asked for the anagogical interpretation, which is considered more challenging than the work of defining terms, differentiating manuscript variations, or identifying the speaker. Anagogical interpretation, although often treated as particular to Biblical exegesis, is still well within the normal range of reading practices used in grammatical instruction.³⁴

The Subjects and Disciplines Introduced by Grammarians in Late Roman Egypt and in the Tura Papyri

Cribiore surveys the papyrological evidence from late Roman Egypt and finds that the practices current in that period correlate well with the definition of grammatical instruction supplied by Dionysius Thrax:

Grammatike is an *empeiria* (acquired expertise) of the general usage of poets and prose writers. It has six parts: first, accurate reading with due regard for prosody; second, explanation of the literary devices contained; third, the provision of notes on phraseology and subject matter; fourth, the discovery of etymology; fifth, the working out of analogical regularities; sixth, the critical study of literature, which is the finest part of the *techne* (art).³⁵

³³ *EccIT* 6.5–7.26.

³⁴ Throughout the lessons collected in volumes II to IV on Ecclesiastes, the students frequently made requests for the anagogical interpretation of the passage being discussed. For example, τὴν ἀναγωγὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνδρεῖαν: "Please give a spiritual interpretation to 'what use is courage'" (*EccIT* 152.9); "Are the literal and the anagogical mixed?" (*EccIT* 150.14); "Please give a spiritual interpretation of 'he recognized this as the end of every man'" (*EccIT* 199.9).

³⁵ Cribiore 2001: 185, definition by Dionysius Thrax (ca. 100 BCE) in *Gramm. Graeci* 1.1. For etymologies in the lessons of Didymus, the reader is referred to the excellent index in Browning Nelson 1995: 192–6, which includes primarily Biblical personal and place names.

On this basis, if Didymus was a grammarian, we should expect to see him including all or most of these six parts of *grammatike* in his lessons. According to this definition, grammatical instruction has both a set canon of textual skills and nomenclature (grammatical terms, literary devices, etymology, textual variations) and a great deal of space for free-form exposition in the form of “notes on phraseology and subject matter” or “critical study of literature.” The former category of skills is easy to recognize in Didymus, as we shall see. The latter is where he, like other grammarians, found room to talk about syllogisms and birds and numbers. Another definition of the subjects proper to the grammarian is quoted by Catherine Chin in her study on *Grammar and Christianity*:

Grammar is the science specifically concerned with reading and with the exposition of what is said in the poets and other writers: in the poets, that their proper arrangement may be preserved, and in writers, that their proper arrangement may be free of faults. There are two parts of grammar, one that is called exegetic and one that is called horistic. The exegetic is explanatory, and has to do with the matter of reading; the horistic is delimiting, and demonstrates principles such as the parts of speech, and the virtues and vices of speech. The whole art of grammar consists above all in the understanding of the poets, writers, and historians, in ready exposition, and in the logic of speaking and writing correctly.³⁶

As we will see in the following, Didymus was far more interested in the exegetic aspect of grammar, and while he enumerated and defined the parts of speech, he was not training his students to become expert speakers.

Didymus introduced all of the standard subjects and disciplines to his students.³⁷ By far the most frequent subject was the differentiation of parts of speech and definition of grammatical terms. While several examples of explanation of parts of speech have been noted in the previous section, we might add here the discussion of *PsT* 312.22 where Didymus addressed the phrase “and we confess thy name in eternity” (Psalm 43:9). He gave two alternative readings, depending on whether one reads a dative of agency or of location. As he went on to consider grammatical categories for names,

³⁶ Chin 2008: 44 quoting from Diomedes, *Artes grammaticae* I.426.13–20 (Keil 1855–1880); cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.4.2.

³⁷ Didymus is familiar with a large body of literature outside of the Christian canon and extending beyond Christian authors. In the Psalms and Ecclesiastes commentaries alone (i.e., those of which we can be sure that they were the basis for grammatical lessons), he cites by name: Aquila, Aristotle, the Delphic Oracle, Democritus, Epicurus, Galen, Hermes Trismegistus (*Corpus Hermeticum*), Homer, Isocrates, Josephus, Menemachus, Philo, Plato, Porphyry, Prodicus, Protagoras, Pythagoras, Socrates, Solon, Symmachus, Theodotion, and Zeno of Elea. See Browning Nelson: 1995, 187–8.

Didymus revealed that he himself had had a grammatical education and was not only familiar with the definitions and distinctions used by grammarians, but referred to their writings explicitly in discussing this point, as elsewhere:

The grammarians say that the proper name is distinguished from the appellative. Also the proper name can be understood in two ways. It is differentiated from appellative and from catachrestic use. They call “man” the names for forms and species which signify the common substance, an appellative, but they call the names of individual men proper names.³⁸

Here Didymus used the text which mentions the word “name” as an opportunity to explain the difference between appellative and proper names. This has nothing whatsoever to do with the passage from the Psalms, but connecting this information to a revered text served to make both that text and the breaking down of knowledge into categories and types part of the literary patrimony to which the student was learning to relate.

In keeping with the traditional approach to the interpretation of Homer, Didymus also worked through issues of textual variants and punctuation with his students, and there are many questions directed at identifying the speaker or at how to get at the higher significance of a given phrase or passage as we saw above.³⁹ Likewise, in keeping with tradition, Didymus instructed his students in identifying and interpreting various literary tropes. In one passage, Didymus clarified what a hyperbole is:

Question: Is the literal meaning both unbelievable and impossible?

Answer: It is neither unbelievable nor impossible, for it is said in the manner of a hyperbole. Hyperbolic statements are not unbelievable and impossible – sometimes perhaps impossible, but not unbelievable.⁴⁰

³⁸ *PsT* 184.15–21.

³⁹ Not surprisingly, the students are not particularly interested in punctuation and none of their questions is directed at attaining more information on it. Didymus discusses textual variants at *EccT* 304.18–19, *PsT* 87.17–88.8, and *PsT* 275.8–12. He is not nearly as interested in this type of philological work as Origen, probably because his disability would make comparing such details extraordinarily difficult. Cf. Browning Nelson 1995: 148–50.

⁴⁰ *EccT* 175.8. This definition of hyperbole is from Demetrius of Phaleron, *de elocutione* 125, where he writes: Πᾶσα μὲν οὖν ὑπερβολὴ ἀδύνατός ἐστιν: οὔτε γὰρ ἂν χιόνος λευκότερον γένοιτο, οὔτ' ἂν ἀνέμῳ θέειν ὁμοιον. αὕτη μέντοι ἡ ὑπερβολή, ἡ εἰρημένη, ἑξαιρέτως ὀνομάζεται ἀδύνατος. διό δὲ καὶ μάλιστα ψυχρὰ δοκεῖ πᾶσα ὑπερβολή, διότι ἀδυνάτω ἔοικεν.

In another case, we see a keen student eager to spot the catachresis:

Question: Is there not a catachrestic usage in the verse “from the whips of the tongue he will hide you?” (Job 5:21). What is the whip of the tongue?

Answer: Do not interpret this literally. It means false speech, calumny.⁴¹

Didymus also took every opportunity to instill in his students proper exegetical practice and explained how to work out the right interpretation of a certain term which is used in different ways and can have different anagogical meanings:

Question: Is it possible to interpret “teeth” as words?

Answer: If it signifies repentance and the wrath of those not accomplishing what they set out to do, we interpret it in this way, that “they gnashed their teeth.” The gnashing of teeth means their repentance, either repentance or sorrow befalling them because of their failure. If you want to interpret teeth in another way, it is not supported by this verse. It is often possible to have a correct interpretation, but not supported in the case of a specific verse. Because it is true, those who are unable to bring their ideas into agreement with the words accept it. For the teeth of the soul are often called its powers of mastication.⁴²

Here the student was hypothesizing a certain interpretation for the term “teeth.” Didymus modified his suggestion by means of cross-referencing: teeth should be taken in the sense of “gnashing of teeth” and thus as suggesting repentance or moral chagrin (“sorrow befalling them because of their failure”). Didymus then delivered a general principle of interpretation: while it is conceivable that there is another viable interpretation for “teeth,” one would have to substantiate it on the basis of a different verse. Then, as a sort of spontaneous throw-away, he suggested that the soul might have “powers of mastication,” but what exactly those might be, and whether they correspond to the moral chagrin indicated by “gnashing of teeth,” remains obscure. This willingness to leave the interpretation open and give greater priority to principles of textual engagement than to defining one specific meaning of the text would tend to confirm that it was technique and not text which was really the object of study.

A very frequent topic was logic or dialectic. Didymus knew his Aristotle very well and could explain how to “reason from contraries”

⁴¹ *PsT* 218.29–31. ⁴² *PsT* 219.31–220.2.

off the cuff.⁴³ This topic is fundamental to the commentaries and should be taken as a resource serving the other more abstract topics like hermeneutics, ethics, or theology. For example, Didymus used his knowledge of the Aristotelian and Stoic tradition to make an ethical point about *adiaphora*:

Nothing is a good, which does not make good the one who has it. Nothing good can exist along with sin. Sin can exist with health and strength and beauty. No one sins with good, but with good health we can sin. Therefore health is not a good thing. So this problem is proved syllogistically.⁴⁴

Syllogisms were a particular favorite of Didymus, and he explained them frequently in the course of interpreting the Psalms, closely following Aristotle's *Analytica Priora* and Stoic logic in his account of the types of syllogisms.⁴⁵

Didymus also taught on physics and zoology, reproducing some Aristotle via his knowledge of Philo and integrating Stoic teachings on physics. He even borrowed the Stoic notion of *krasis* to explain the incarnation as analogous to the mixture of honey and water.⁴⁶ When various plants and animals were named in the Bible, Didymus took time for explanation of animal behavior or plant properties:

But this was also said with another example: the high flying birds cannot be caught with lime. But when they come down because of a certain curiosity about things below, then they can be caught easily.⁴⁷

In fact, in the same passage which includes the question aimed at eliciting the specific type of snake preferred by deer, Didymus was not explaining the metaphorical spiritual thirst of the person for God. He was in the midst of a longish account of the behavior of deer: they get thirsty after killing and eating snakes, and they also seek water in order to wash off the blood

⁴³ While no complete survey of Didymus' knowledge of Aristotle has as yet been undertaken, some familiarity with the *Categories*, *Prior Analytics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Topics*, and *On Interpretation* was identified by Browning Nelson 1995: 87. To this we can add knowledge of *On Rhetoric* based on the definition of fear discussed below and the example of invalid courtroom evidence below. The latter allusion but not the former was identified by the editors of the commentaries in the *Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen* series.

⁴⁴ *EccLT* 150.11–14. ⁴⁵ *PsT* 51.19–25. ⁴⁶ *PsT* 45.7–8.

⁴⁷ *PsT* 249.8–9. Didymus is not the only fourth-century educator who thinks it appropriate and worthwhile to catalogue the flora and fauna appearing in Biblical stories. In *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.39.59, Augustine asserts "I think it would be possible for someone who could, and who wanted to perform some great and beneficial task for the use of the brothers, to commit to writing the geography, animals, plants and trees, stones and metals and whatever sorts of unknown things Scripture mentions, discussing and explaining them." As translated, quoted and discussed in Chin 2008: 17.

which has splashed on their heads in the process of dispatching the snake. They also eat snakes in order to rejuvenate themselves when they have grown old and their antlers have fallen off. Aging deer, Didymus explained, eat a poisonous snake, hide throughout the period of vulnerability entailed by not having antlers, and then their antlers grow back.⁴⁸

In addition, Didymus had a penchant for numerology and drew on Pythagorean theories to explain how to interpret certain numbers in Scripture on the basis of the belief that they correspond to certain shapes and those shapes correspond to certain qualities. On this principle, a tetragonal number such as sixteen makes a square, and squares indicate stability: "If someone wishes to speak technically about this number, he should say that the firmness of the divine church is revealed through it. For the number itself is a square, and also a cube. For three times three times three equals twenty-seven."⁴⁹ This interest, as combined with astrology and the calculation of the significance of dates of birth, is connected to the contemporary debate about fate and determinism familiar from Augustine and a common preoccupation of Christians in Late Antiquity.⁵⁰

Didymus taught on both theoretical and applied ethics. He explained the mechanics of the passions mainly on the basis of Stoic psychology, as in *PsT* 293.6–12 when he discussed whether also the body or only the soul can sin and at what point a sin has actually occurred, differentiating *propatheia* from movements of the soul to which the person grants rational assent (and therefore sins). Likewise, he defined the emotions, or passions as the Stoics would call them. Fear, in response to a query by a student, is given the textbook Aristotelian definition.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *PsT* 296.20–31. A focus on mathematics, physics, and astronomy is typical of the Alexandrian schools, as discussed in Watts 2006: 233–4. Watts characterizes Didymus' school in a manner most compatible with my findings from the Tura Papyri, contrasting the Alexandrian reality with Athanasius' anti-intellectual ideology: "the teaching of Christian intellectuals, complete with philosophical, rhetorical, and argumentative influences, continued without interruption. In fact, no figure illustrates the continued relevance of intellectual training to Alexandrian Christians better than Athanasius's younger contemporary, Didymus the Blind" (Watts 2006: 182).

⁴⁹ *GenT* 195.15–18 discussed in Browning Nelson 1995: 159; for Didymus on numerology, Browning Nelson 1995: 154–73. See also *GenT* 24.5–10.

⁵⁰ Not least in Augustine, *De civ.* V.3–7.

⁵¹ *PsT* 293.13 "λύπη ἐστὶν λογικοῦ μετὰ τοῦ ἀναπολεῖν τὰ αἰτίαι τῆς λύπης." Compare Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.5 "ἔστω δὲ ὁ φόβος λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ ἐκ φαντασίας μέλλοντος κακοῦ φθαρτικοῦ ἢ λυπηροῦ" – "Fear may be defined as a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future." Other emotional states are defined for example in *PsT* 295.17 on ἀκακία or innocence and *PsT* 296.16 on chastity. The proximity of these examples to one another suggests that Didymus was giving a lesson on revising and defining the virtues.

In explaining all of the varied topics above, especially in longer answers to questions when he felt a student really had not understood, Didymus used numerous standard school examples, such as the mind as the captain of a ship or God as a farmer.⁵² What is striking is that Didymus deployed Bible stories in the same way, as illustrations for concepts from logic or dialectic. Didymus discussed theology with his students, mainly considering the mechanics of the resurrection and warning them against competing schools of thought, especially the Arians, Eunomians, and Apollinarians. However, theology did not outweigh any of the other subjects, and was certainly not included in a quantity or frequency germane to catechetical (or theological) instruction.

Logistics, Student Body, and Curriculum in Late Roman Egypt and in the Tura Papyri

Cribiore has analyzed the papyrological evidence for the general circumstances of grammatical education. At each point, whether with regard to the gender-composition of the student body or the role of teaching in the grammarian's larger career, the Tura Papyri reveal Didymus fitting in very well with his colleagues in late Roman Egypt.⁵³ There was generally no physical institution constituting the school or even the classroom. Class sessions could be held out of doors or in public space or in a private house. The teacher was his own administration and did not have a larger institution around him as in modern schools: the teacher had to accept or reject students and assess their level or their qualifications to join the class on a case-by-case basis. Thus the teacher, and not the school-as-institution, was the focal point of the course of study. Individuals who offered grammatical instruction could also be involved in other scholarly or professional pursuits.⁵⁴

⁵² On the soul as captain of a ship, see Browning Nelson 1995: 54–8, on God as farmer, see Browning Nelson 1995: 75–6. Other examples refer to medicine, education, arts and crafts, athletics, geometers and mathematicians, kings and generals, architecture and natural history (Browning Nelson 1995: 54–82). For a full index of examples, see Browning Nelson 1995: 183–6.

⁵³ The evidence presented here for the logistics of Didymus' classroom is largely dependent on the unpublished dissertation of Anne Browning Nelson, whose laudably thorough and detailed study focused primarily on such analysis but did not attempt to define Didymus' position in the larger pedagogical landscape of his day.

⁵⁴ Cribiore 2001: 54–6. See also Rubenson and Westergren in the present volume.

This independent teacher offered a course of full-time study with a more or less set class. The student body consisted of a group of young people which included girls or young women. Libanius rhetor outlines a course from ages sixteen to twenty for boys doing rhetorical training, hence secondary training with a grammarian would be around that age or even younger.⁵⁵ Grammatical training was a type of schooling where the quantity of girls in the classroom thinned out compared with their relatively frequent inclusion in elementary classrooms, but girls or young women were still present and were not at all the exception as women were in tertiary education. The curriculum was not formalized, but traditional, and the social and cultural value attributed to studying certain texts served to stabilize and homogenize the program of study.

Like his colleagues elsewhere in late Roman Egypt, Didymus also had other research interests which he pursued outside of teaching.⁵⁶ We know that he wrote various theological treatises. He also worked with promising younger ascetic scholars who certainly had already received grammatical instruction before coming to him, such as Evagrius of Pontus, Rufinus, and Jerome.⁵⁷ It appears from the varied degree of editing in the commentaries included in the Tura find that Didymus had integrated his teaching with his publishing, for his commentaries on Job and Genesis have had the questions pulled out and are somewhat less digressive and elliptical in style. This would suggest that they are a later iteration of the lesson transcripts and that they had been subjected to editing on their way to publication. The Psalms and Ecclesiastes lessons have been processed up from the stenographer's notes, which would have been in shorthand, but were transmitted in a less-edited form which included the student questions, digressions, and repetitions.

Like other grammarians in late Roman Egypt, Didymus offered a full-time course of study. Anne Browning Nelson has made an analysis of the duration and frequency of Didymus' lessons, suggesting that the instruction from each commentary would have required several weeks of

⁵⁵ Cribiore 2001: 56. ⁵⁶ Cribiore 2001: 55–6.

⁵⁷ Jerome, in *Ep.* 50, to Domnio, claims that Didymus taught him the study of Scripture: "Didymum in Scripturis sanctis catechistas habui." In his *Hist. eccl.* 4.23, Socrates Scholasticus quotes *Gnost.* 44–8 explaining that "Evagrius became a disciple of these men." For Evagrius' educational background, see Muehlberger in this volume. Other writings of Didymus include treatises on theological questions at issue in his day, for example, *On the Holy Spirit* and *Against the Manichaeans*.

full-time study. It is also possible to establish by means of incidental references within the commentary that the lessons took place twice a day, presumably before and after a midday siesta. This is evident when Didymus refers to what the group had covered “earlier” or “this morning.” In a few instances, the lessons can be shown to take place on sequential days, because Didymus refers to what was covered “yesterday.”⁵⁸

Like his colleagues and contemporaries, Didymus was working with a more or less consistent group of young people which included young women. That women were included is evidenced by a passing comment Didymus made about pronouns.⁵⁹ That his students were not adults can be surmised from the marked curtness of his manner when he answered their questions, an attitude which a teacher would not normally take when working with his peers. For example, one student was struggling with the Stoic notion of *propatheia* and asked, “What is *propatheia*?” Didymus says in reply “We have already said that frequently.”⁶⁰ Another student asked, “What does ‘increase’ mean?” and Didymus simply replied, “Listen!”⁶¹

That he was working with a consistent group and building on material already covered is confirmed by the fact that Didymus provided more detailed explanations of terms and concepts at the beginning of the Psalm commentary, and only repeated these more generally later; a more or less set body of students was expected to have attended the earlier lessons and retained what was taught there, as illustrated by the discussion of the curriculum below. This format is also manifest in Didymus’ familiarity

⁵⁸ Browning Nelson 1995: 19–23 also shows that the lectures on Psalms 26–30 took place on four consecutive days.

⁵⁹ Didymus refers explicitly to the presence of women in his classroom in *EccLT* 334.24–6 as an illustration for the use of the male plural to refer to both males and females: “One says of the men and women attending that there are ἀκροασόμενοι [*akroasómenoi*] present, not ἀκροασόμεναι [*akroasómenai*].” While we might begrudge Didymus’ extrapolation that thus being included in a masculine suffix was an honor for the women whereas the men being included in a feminine suffix would be an insult, without this particular instance of sexism we would not have evidence that women were participating in this course of study.

⁶⁰ *PsT* 222.12.

⁶¹ *EccLT* 43.3. Further instances of curtness on Didymus’ part can be found in *PsT* 225.26 and *PsT* 226.9. In *EccLT* 220.7–18 Didymus responded to a query as to whether the passage makes sense if taken literally thus: “You know that I’ve explained this in detail before. I said that not every fault damages the person who commits it. At the time, I used the following example.” Didymus then set out the same example of a painter learning his trade in great detail and spent two pages explaining whether there is anyone on earth with no sin, and if so, what kind of sin is absent. One gets the impression that he would not like to hear this question again.

with his students' individual preoccupations.⁶² It is evident that Didymus had in mind a rough sequence of subjects intended for a set group when he told a student to defer his query about how to differentiate substance and quality because for the moment they were working on prepositions: Didymus assumed that the same student would be there for the later lesson on substance and quality and could have his question addressed then.⁶³

The lesson transcripts reveal that Didymus was pursuing a systematic curriculum. The commentaries which have come down to us focus on the same books of the Bible as the curriculum connecting Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Job, and/or Proverbs or Genesis which was laid out by Origen and later also pursued by Evagrius.⁶⁴ The beginners were to start with the Psalms, the book most commonly known to Egyptian Christians in this period. Use of the Psalms as an introductory course is consistent with the fact that the transcripts from the lessons on the Psalms contain the most remedial questions and answers. At the beginning of the commentary on the Psalms, Didymus oriented himself to the more basic questions of the students and mostly gave correspondingly basic answers. Some such beginners' questions have already been mustered in the section on subject matter and level above, and it should be noted that the easier subjects and the more remedial questions are concentrated in the lessons based on the earlier chapters of the Psalms.⁶⁵

⁶² Browning Nelson 1995: 24. Didymus was also familiar with his students' typical preoccupations. Question: "What do we conclude, does Job speak as a righteous man or as a sinner?" Answer: "You do not want to learn this alone, for many things depend on it. If you would recall what you have heard, *you would not always be disturbed about these things. . .*" (PsT 222.15).

⁶³ PsT 211.8–10.

⁶⁴ In the prologue to his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Origen identifies Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs with the three stages of the traditional Greek curriculum, namely moral wisdom, natural wisdom, and inspective wisdom. Evagrius also connects specific though slightly different books of the Bible to the educational stages of ethics, physics, and theology, and maps these disciplines onto Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (*Schol. Prov.* 247; cf. Stefaniw 2010a). Christian authors prescribe slightly varying sequences of books with slightly varying justifications, just as did their pagan colleagues, some of whom put ethics at the basis of the curriculum and others physics; cf. Sorabji 2005: 324. Although the commentary on Job has been edited and the student questions removed, there also it is evident that yet more advanced material, mostly on ethics and the cultivation of the mind and the soul, has been introduced. Since Job is persistently referenced in the commentaries on Psalms and Ecclesiastes, it is reasonable to suppose that the study of the book of Job was a part of the curriculum that the same students would later be reading. See also Larsen in the present volume for the monastic curriculum and its use of the Psalms.

⁶⁵ In the first volume on the Psalms, of a total of fourteen questions, there are five basic questions with basic answers and three basic questions with complex answers. In the sixth volume on Ecclesiastes, by contrast, there are nine basic questions but they receive complex answers in seven cases, and there are seventeen complex questions of a total twenty-six questions.

Didymus built up from more basic to more complex material over time as the group progressed through the study of the Psalms and into Ecclesiastes. In the material preserved in the first three volumes from the Psalms, the questions were largely focused on “checking” the referent, the situation of the speaker, and the proper differentiation of certain terms.⁶⁶ These were correct and normal concerns for grammatical study, but they did not address advanced issues of interpretation or application. As the study program continued, Didymus started to introduce more challenging material; he responded to basic questions with more complex answers and thereby challenged the students to build on the information and techniques already presented. From the middle to the end of the lessons on the Psalms, we can see a batch of the same type of questions as at the beginning and the same concern for eliciting definitions, differentiating terms, and establishing the speaker. However, Didymus gave more in-depth answers to these questions. For example, in the lesson on Psalm 24, a student asked why a particular term was used: “why ‘hidden’” (πῶς κρυπτῶ)?⁶⁷ Didymus offered two explanations, one interpreting “hidden” as referring to sinful thoughts, according to which we learn that a person of virtue avoids both practical sins and hidden sins. This was substantiated with a reference to Psalm 18.13, “from my hidden ones clear me,” which Didymus quoted as “ἀπό τῶν κρυφίων μου καθάρισον με.” The second interpretation offered was that “hidden” refers to “the unknown” (τὰ ἀγνοούμενα), presumably sins committed unwittingly. Didymus explained that even a saint who is assured of not having knowingly committed any sin must ask forgiveness for sins of which he is not aware. His explanation goes on for two and a half pages, working through concepts of clean and unclean, hidden and revealed, as analogies for concealed or unknown sin vs. sin that is examined and corrected. Didymus used the typical Homeric exegetical method of substantiating this point by means of cross-reference to other Psalms using the same or related words, thus performing the advanced literacy that he wished his students to learn, while also introducing an ethical application of the text with the implicit directive to the students to examine themselves in the same manner as the Psalmist.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *PsT* 81.9: “Does he mean the written law?”; *PsT* 138.13: “Did he speak while in ecstasy?”; *PsT* 179.16: “Does ‘formation’ apply to all intelligent beings?”; *PsT* 229.26 “Does he call the tortures ‘Evil’ and not the badness?”

⁶⁷ *PsT* 75.28.

⁶⁸ The co-occurrence of exhortation to self-examination with privileged pedagogical social practices is well attested in the ancient world and does not originate with Christianity. See among numerous studies Hadot 1981, Nussbaum 1994, and Foucault 1984.

Towards the end of the lessons on the Psalms, a student asked “The face?” and Didymus answered: “The face, which the human being has received, which came into being according to the image and likeness of God, the proper concept of God, is in a sense the face of God, formed from . . . I once provided another explanation of this . . . he calls the son the image of the father, image as form or form as the . . . which they attribute to the soul, an idea.”⁶⁹ Didymus thus took a basic question as an opportunity to work on far more advanced topics of how derivative images work and the relation of the divine to the human.⁷⁰ He referred to previous discussion and expected the student to be able to build on that to understand the topic, in this case the image-archetype structure of creation, better than before.

By the time the group arrived at the study of Ecclesiastes, the students had responded to the challenge and were asking better questions. While still correctly addressing parts of speech and terminology, they also pursued more ambitious topics. The same pattern of responding to a basic request for definition with two or three pages of ethical philosophy, numerology, logic, or language theory was repeated frequently. The students also asked questions aimed at categorizing the larger argument, as in “Is ‘when the ax slips off’ a sophistic argumentation?” (The phrase in question is found in Ecclesiastes 10:10.) Another more advanced question was aimed at synthesizing the structure of a larger discourse: “So, at every point of the disquisition [προβλήματος], there are beginners and perfect ones?”⁷¹ The student had a hypothesis about how to apply the notion of two classes of people and wanted to confirm how consistently those same two classes, beginners and perfect ones, appear throughout the discourse. This is a far more advanced level of engagement with the text than merely checking who the speaker is or what certain words mean.

Taking all of this practical evidence together, we can conclude that Didymus was teaching full time for at least part of the year, that his students

⁶⁹ *PsT* 301.30–302.2. The answer continues for another half a page, covering more issues of anthropology and the composition of the human person relative to the creator. A cross-reference to 2 Cor. 3.18 is used to develop the idea of veiling or unveiling the face, and Didymus explains that the face can be veiled or covered by ignorance and sin but is uncovered when we attain wisdom so that we reflect the glory of God. The lacunose state of the text is, according to Puech, a result of the fact that the pages were exposed to the appetites of insects.

⁷⁰ The same pattern of responding to a basic question with a more complex answer used to introduce more advanced material also occurs at *PsT* 140.1: “Which walls are meant?”; *PsT* 149.21: “Is the redeemer speaking here?”; *PsT* 207.21: “Was this Adam’s shame?”; *PsT* 259.32: “What meaning has the number thirty-seven?” among numerous other instances.

⁷¹ *EcclT* 303.7; see *EcclT* 9.13 and *EcclT* 76.4 for similar exchanges.

were a more or less set group of individuals who were familiar to him, that the group included young women, and that they were pursuing a systematically progressing curriculum. All of these characteristics are consistent with the way grammarians in late Roman Egypt typically worked.

The Mode of Instruction among Grammarians and in the Tura Papyri

It is time to consider the significance and cultural function of the mode of instruction used by grammarians. Cribiore describes the mode of grammatical instruction in late Roman Egypt thus:

A passage, which was a thing closed in upon itself, was at the same time a dense cluster of interwoven linguistic and historical elements. It could swell up *ad infinitum*, becoming a microcosm of erudite, fragmented knowledge. When the grammarian pointed out to his class glosses, figures, tropes, relations of elements of language, similarities with other parts of an author's work or the work of other authors in a proliferation of exegesis, a text became a perfect model to which other texts had to conform.⁷²

Here several points are of significance for understanding the function of the grammarian and its import for our model of religious identity and education when Didymus is understood as a grammarian. In this pedagogical tradition, a passage from a valorized text was not in a steady state: it was treated as a volatile thing, capable of bodying forth all manner of knowledge if the catalyst of the grammarian's manner of engagement with the text was applied. It is correct to say that the text was a model for other texts, for the way knowledge should connect with language, but one might add that the text, thus engaged by the grammarian and his students, was also a model of the universe.

As such, the education provided by a grammarian was an appropriate medium for forming elites and an apt occasion for them to practice the mores and affect belonging to their station.⁷³ A course of study with

⁷² Cribiore 2001: 187.

⁷³ Cribiore 2001: 9 talks about the tendency of education to always be "enmeshed in the ideology of the moment." For fourth-century elites, the ideology of the moment meant correlating one's knowledge with the order of things: "Learning some skills and elements of a cultural patrimony went hand in hand with assimilation of and submission to the rules of the dominant order"; cf. Morgan 1998: 90ff.

a grammarian served the social and cultural function of consolidating mainstream identity and preparing the participants for privileged vocations. We know for example of a certain Epharmostos who, after long-term and intensive study with a grammarian, could “launch a prestigious career in state service” becoming a gentlemanly collector of Peripatetic writings.”⁷⁴ The students of grammarians, while far more privileged than the majority, did not necessarily rise this high and need not have carried on to do higher studies with a rhetor or philosopher. Someone called Apollonius pursued his studies less intensively and less consistently, but still was equipped to cope with the correspondence duties entailed by his job as assistant to the chief of police.⁷⁵ Of the handful of Didymus’ monastic students whom we know by name (Palladius, Rufinus, Jerome, Evagrius), all appear to have completed secondary and tertiary education before studying with Didymus, and not to have come to Didymus for grammatical training but rather for mentoring and collegial exchange. Didymus’ less prominent students can be located among the privileged and upwardly mobile, not only because they were able to pursue secondary training at all, but because of the sort of examples that Didymus gave when he was providing more advanced ethical applications from the text. When he discusses swearing, for example, Didymus gave advice on courtroom etiquette: one should only swear an oath if required to do so by the judge. Evidence mustered by means of taking an oath where other forms of evidence are available, Didymus explained, following Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* I.15.27–33ff, is not valid.⁷⁶ The inclusion of such advice registered the class of at least some of the students, who were expected to either study law and rhetoric or to be citizens of such standing as to have dealings in the courts.

Grammatical instruction was built around the reading and interpretation of a valorized text as a means of conveying both knowledge and skill, where skill means not just the mastery of analytical and exegetical techniques, but also the cultural skill desirable for people who will bear responsibility in their communities.⁷⁷ Students would acquire knowledge of grammatical terminology, logic, and language theory along with general knowledge appropriate to a more educated person and included in the exposition of the text, performed in just the centrifugal and *ad hoc* manner we see in Didymus. But the students also assimilated a larger skill. They

⁷⁴ Cribiore 2001: 188–9.

⁷⁵ Cribiore’s account of Apollonius is based on P.Paris 1 and 63, that of Epharmostos on P.Col. Zen. II.60 and P.Lond. VII.2017.

⁷⁶ *EcdT* 69.10–14. ⁷⁷ See Cribiore 2001: 185.

were rehearsing the connection of everything, of all valuable knowledge, to the fundamental texts of their culture.

In most classrooms, the texts to which everything else got connected came from Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Pindar or Menander. In Didymus' classroom, it was certain books of the Bible, especially Genesis, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job, which were treated as the depository of all worthwhile knowledge. In making this substitution, Didymus was teaching his students to look for substantiation of the order of things in Christian Scripture rather than in the poets read by their pagan neighbors. They were developing skill in orienting everything, including themselves, to a new locus of reality, rehearsing again and again the connection between their most valued cultural knowledge and these substitute texts. This agenda was enabled by the circuitous method of proliferating connections which Didymus used: the text was really about everything and therefore must be asked to illustrate everything. The text was not a delivery system for facts. The text was the occasion to see a precious patrimony revealed, and the grammarian's classroom was a space in which to engage with that patrimony. Didymus' lessons were an elaborate exercise in linking and fitting.⁷⁸ As Didymus laid out a passage, he generated, by such matching and tying and hooking mechanisms, a centrifugal epistemic spiral, spinning the text out to touch all the reaches of human knowledge. Didymus explicitly posited Scripture as a "means of full and complete knowledge."⁷⁹ This assertion was made in an account of a challenge by a pagan philosopher who claimed that Didymus could not prove the incorporeality of the soul on the basis of Scripture alone, suggesting that supplying such proofs about the metaphysical status of the components of the human person was what one would ordinarily expect a valorized ancient text to do. That is the function that a text which was made the object of this sort of study was supposed to perform: to supply the epistemic foundation for everything that mattered morally, philosophically, and academically.

⁷⁸ In making her analysis of the frequency and duration of Didymus' lessons, Browning Nelson points out that sessions do not necessarily end at a natural point in the text being studied. The amount of commentary given is not consistent in its relation to the amount of text covered. Sometimes there is a great deal of exposition on a three-word phrase, and sometimes a large chunk of text is brushed over. This low correlation of exposition with text quantity and text structure confirms my assertion that the exposition of the text itself is not the primary purpose of the lessons recorded in the Tura Papyri.

⁷⁹ *PsT* 34.10–18 and 239.14–19.

Conclusions: Didymus the Grammarian and Christian Identity in Late Antique Alexandria

The classroom we can observe through the student questions on the commentaries was the classroom of a grammarian. It is vital to note that the claim of this essay is not that Didymus was “influenced” by the pedagogical traditions of his day, nor that he was adapting pagan teaching methods to his Christian agenda.⁸⁰ This essay is a matter of making a simple diagnosis: an individual who exhibits all the symptoms of being a grammarian can and should be diagnosed as a grammarian. This diagnosis should be made without introducing a special relationship of influence or derivation between that individual and other individuals of the same class of grammarians only because that particular grammarian has a different religious allegiance, unless or until it can be demonstrated that religious allegiance determines what and how one may teach.⁸¹ At the same time, it would be cavalier to ignore the fact that Didymus replaced the traditional canon of texts to be studied with a selection of texts from the Christian canon. What does this mean for our model of how religious identity and education fit together in fourth-century Alexandria? In line with the discussion in the introduction, this question can be pursued by examining the function of the grammarian in connecting young people to their cultural heritage. Didymus, in the role of the grammarian, performed this function, but he was also performing a larger and more profound act of anchoring the cultural patrimony in Christian texts, thereby also validating Christian young people in participating in the mainstream of privileged society. As Cribiore puts it:

Education was based on the transmission of an established body of knowledge, about which there was wide consensus. Teachers were considered the custodians and interpreters of a tradition and were

⁸⁰ Cf. Stefaniw 2010a: 293–4: “[The influence model] of the interaction between pagan philosophical tradition and early Christian thought is not coherent. Christian thinkers cannot and should not be said to have ‘borrowed’ or ‘taken over’ pagan educational tradition, because saying so makes several problematic assumptions. First, it proceeds on the assumption that Christians had some other options, but chose from a neutral vantage point to integrate traditional ideas into their separate independent systems. Secondly, it fails to differentiate between ideas and practices which – for contemporary Christians – were religiously marked as pagan and those which were simply culturally obvious. And finally, it constructs a false dichotomy between Christians as members of a *religion*, conceived of as if it existed separate from culture, and pagans as members of a *culture*, so that any appearance of known elements of contemporary culture in Christian writings is perceived as something pagan invading from outside.”

⁸¹ Cf. Larsen in the present volume.

concerned with protecting its integrity. Education was supposed to lead to a growing understanding of an inherited doctrine. Admiration for the past gave rise to the aspiration to model oneself on one's predecessors and to maintain the system and methods that had formed them.⁸²

This role of education in cultural life is the reason that observing a Christian teacher like Didymus giving grammatical lessons is so significant to our understanding of the social position of Christians in Alexandria in this period. Rather than providing "catechetical" education in order to consolidate a separate confessional identity and distinguish Christian students from the larger society, Didymus' classroom functioned to attach Christians to the socially central and dominant classes. By transmitting the established body of knowledge around which there was a strong consensus, Didymus allowed Christian young people to understand themselves as the rightful heirs of all that is most valuable in literate culture. Far from being a sectarian exercise in minority religious doctrines, Didymus' lessons were part of an audacious cultural maneuver: whereas Emperor Julian had attempted to exclude Christians from teaching and transmitting the traditional educational corpus, here we see a Christian teacher outflanking Julian's agenda and not only transmitting that established body of knowledge, but doing so on the basis of Christian texts, thus raising a claim that those texts had superseded Homer, Hesiod, and Menander.⁸³ The Christians involved in Didymus' school, whether the students or the families who chose to send their young people there, were angling for a place in mainstream society. While we know already that the fourth century saw Christians taking over the tradition of *paideia* and assuming more and more powerful positions in society, in these lesson transcripts we can observe the day-to-day mechanisms which enabled that shift.

It makes very good sense for Christians to be slotting the Bible into this position at this time, given the function of the texts studied in grammatical schools. As Catherine Chin found in her study of grammatical treatises from the Western Empire, "Part of the imaginative work that grammarians accomplished, then, was the construction of an authoritative literary tradition."⁸⁴ Late fourth-century Christians needed to make their own texts the basis for grammatical study if they were to successfully take on the dominant social position now more available to them through a new relationship with imperial authority. Grammatical praxis was not only

⁸² Criboire 2001: 8; cf. Morgan 1998: 120–51. ⁸³ Julian, *Ep.* 36. ⁸⁴ Chin 2008: 2.

a way of relating the self to the ancients and thus identifying oneself as part of an esteemed lineage. It was also a means of taking possession of a prime deposit of cultural capital. As Chin has expressed it, “reading practices as presented in grammatical literature produced larger ideological structures and implicit narratives, particularly the idea of a homogeneous authoritative past, manifested in literary objects.”⁸⁵ Didymus’ teaching praxis was thus part of the project of Christians practicing a new role as plausible, appropriate, and competent owners of the patrimony. Didymus was authoring a new narrative according to which Christians own Aristotle, and building up an ideological structure within which the young people he taught were viable candidates for positions of civil authority.

Returning now to our earlier question as to what the monks in the monastery of Sts. Arsenius and John Kolobos might have been doing with the Tura Papyri means integrating several other recent findings on education and monasticism with the discovery that Didymus the Blind was a grammarian. There is no need, in the conventional view, to explain why monks were reading commentaries on the Bible. But even the most comfortably unexamined view of monastic textuality makes it necessary to question why lesson transcripts would be preserved and copied with all the questions included. The papyri show signs of use in the form of markings and corrections by multiple hands.⁸⁶ This would confirm that they were used, and not merely archived, in the monastery. On paleographical grounds, they should be dated to the late sixth century, which means they were copied at least once, although since all other property from that monastery was destroyed in 1010⁸⁷ there is no way to prove conclusively that they were copied there. The conventional conclusion drawn from these points is that the monks were working with the commentaries of a venerable exegete, which were perhaps marked up and corrected in the course of reading aloud to a group of brothers. However, given the findings presented in this volume, especially those of Larsen, Muehlberger, and Rubenson, we know that the textual efforts of fourth-century monks were not exclusively dedicated to devotional practices. Education was part of the daily life of monasteries, as routine as weaving baskets or saying prayers. While for some achieving remedial literacy was a chore they had to perform whether they

⁸⁵ Chin 2008: 7. ⁸⁶ Bayliss 2015: 48.

⁸⁷ It was destroyed by Caliph al-Hakim in 1010 but then rebuilt. It was abandoned in the fourteenth century. Cf. Grossmann 1991.

wanted to or not,⁸⁸ those with appetite or aptitude could be selected to go on to more advanced levels of literacy. For that particular section of the monastery population, the transcripts from the Tura Papyri would prove an ideal basis on which to teach advanced literacy and language skills in Greek. The inclusion of the student questions would serve as a model for a less expert teacher or for students unfamiliar with classroom customs. As such, monastic students and teachers from the periphery could shape themselves and their textual practice according to how it had been done in the urban center of Alexandria. By constituting a connection both to the center and to the past, the lesson transcripts as used in the monastery at Tura were just such an anchoring point as noted by Criboire above.

Didymus, as a fourth-century Christian grammarian, found himself in a culturally productive position. He was both innovating (in substituting certain books of the Bible as the object of study) and conserving (in using the same mode and technique to teach the same subjects), thus producing a flourishing forum of engagement with cultural capital for himself and his students. He did not teach in the stance of the beleaguered upholder of religious confession in a diaspora, nor as the defender of tradition ensconced in a parochial ghetto, nor as a guru instructing the elect. He taught close in to the center of knowledge production and used the equipment of the dominant classes, making a viable bid for possession of the knowledge and practices of elite mainstream society in the late Roman Empire. The novelty for Didymus, the element which he had to integrate, was not the reading practices of the grammarian, for these were traditional and had been ordinary for hundreds of years already. What Didymus had to integrate into the realm of the ordinary and obviously valuable was schooling on the basis of books from the Bible in privileged social circles. The Bible, hitherto belonging to the church and the household, was in the latter third of the fourth century, being taken up into a new social space, where it could teach people how to live in a Christian future.

⁸⁸ See the Pachomian Rule 138–40, MPL 23, 92 A–B: CXXXVIII. *Omne quod in conuentu fratrum audierunt disputatum, necessitate cogentur, ut inter se replicent, jejuniorum maxime tempore quando a suis docentur praepositis.* CXXXIX. *Qui rudis in monasterio fuerit ingressus, docebitur prius quae debeat obseruare: et cum doctus ad uniuersa consenserit, dabunt ei uiginti psalmos et duas Epistolas Apostoli, aut alterius Scripturae partem. Et si litteras ignorauerit, hora prima, et tertia et sexta uadet ad eum qui docere potest et qui ei fuerit delegatus, et stabit ante illum, et discet studiosissime, cum omni gratiarum actione.* CXL. *Postea uero scribentur ei elementa, syllabae, uerba, ac nomina: et etiam nolens legere compellatur, et omnino nullus erit in monasterio, qui non discat litteras, et de Scripturis aliquid teneat: quod minimum usque ad nouum Testamentum et Psalterium;* cf. Larsen 2013a.

8 | Affecting Rhetoric: The Adoption of *Ethopoeia* in Evagrius of Pontus' Ascetic Program

ELLEN MUEHLBERGER

It is difficult to overestimate the extent to which the training offered in *paideia* was constitutive for Mediterranean culture in Late Antiquity. This system of education and discipline established the definition of what culture was and the expectations for how one best pursued the intellectual life.¹ The more advanced stages of *paideia* taught people not only how to read texts, but also how to use them; rhetorical training specifically trained students to build upon approved literary culture and forms in the construction of new texts, whether they be persuasive, explanatory, or expository. Consequently, the traces of rhetorical forms appear in all kinds of literature from Late Antiquity.² Historians exploring the ubiquity of the forms of the rhetorical curriculum note how often they were used *outside* the rhetorical classroom. More than mere school exercises, the patterns established by a rhetorical training were “the bedrock upon which the composition of orations, speeches and sermons was built at a time when opportunities for public speaking were numerous in the religious and political arenas.”³ Classical training on the level of rhetoric was in this way a formation, as it shaped the way people thought and wrote.

Just how much of a formative effect rhetorical exercises had must have varied from situation to situation, but it would be wrong to categorize them solely as prompts for writing, even within the rhetorical classroom itself. Ruth Webb has analyzed the pedagogical ambitions of the rhetorical curriculum, and she notes that while the various instructions and examples of composition given in the Late Antique handbooks for rhetorical teachers can seem at first glance to be “overly pedantic” and “sterile,” they were in fact “a pragmatic preparation for life as an eloquent member of the elite” that “reinforced a set of culturally accepted values” in their training of students.⁴ The ancient educational curriculum that we know, through the

¹ For a historical account of the most influential centers of education in Late Antiquity, see Watts 2006.

² Kennedy 1994 offers a concise overview of rhetorical training and the literatures it influenced in *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*.

³ Puertas 2013: vii. ⁴ Webb 2001: 313–14.

multiple surviving handbooks of rhetorical teaching, is our best window into the theories of mind and the processes of enculturation held by teachers and students in Late Antiquity.

As both Mark Sheridan's and Blossom Stefaniw's contributions to this volume confirm, that fact is as true for Christian ascetic teachers and students as for non-Christian teachers and students. In this essay, I will add to their insights about Rufus of Shotep and Didymus the Blind by demonstrating the same about another Christian ascetic writer, Evagrius of Pontus, whose influence on Christian monastic tradition is almost unmatched among writers in Late Antiquity. Like these other monastic fathers, Evagrius also made use of certain rhetorical forms, not solely as structures by which he composed his writing, but also as aids that he suggested to other Christians who were struggling with their difficult practices. In two works, *Protrepticus* and *Paraeneticus*, Evagrius tells those who have sought his advice that they should perform a kind of interpretative act that is known in Classical rhetorical training as *ethopoeia*: extended and often affectively charged speaking in the persona of a character drawn from literature. Examples of *ethopoeia* that survive in rhetorical handbooks from Late Antiquity show writers taking a character famous from literature and composing a first-person monologue representing that character's thoughts, emotions, reflections, and plans when faced with a particular situation. Instances of *ethopoeia* can be quite long: accuracy of depiction is important, but inventive, creative renderings of the character are equally important, even when, or especially when, such renderings take the writer far beyond anything reported in the text that inspired the exercise in the first place.⁵ In the *Protrepticus* and *Paraeneticus*, Evagrius advised his students to practice something like the exercise of *ethopoeia*, and even gave them examples of how to perform it. He did so because he expected that the practice of taking on a character from Scripture and speaking in its voice would help students develop equanimity in the face of challenges and a wise, balanced approach to difficult situations.

Protrepticus

Originally written in Greek, the Evagrian text known as the *Protrepticus* survives in Syriac translation in multiple manuscripts.⁶ As the title it has

⁵ See the range of uses discussed in Amato and Schamp 2005.

⁶ Muyldermans 1952: 75–6 discusses the texts' survival. BM ADD 14578, 14582, 14611, 14614, 14621, and 18817 have *Protrepticus*, while BM ADD 14578, 14582, 14611, 14614, 14615, 14621, and 18817 have *Paraeneticus*. The texts are available in Frankenberg 1912: 554–62.

been given suggests, it is an introductory letter: someone has written to Evagrius for advice on how, as he says, he should undertake his “journey on the road that our Lord has traced,” and Evagrius has written back. Evagrius’ response resonates with the advice given by other fourth-century ascetic teachers from Egypt, those men whose ideas would become so important to Christian monastic communities. Like Antony and Macarius, for example, Evagrius assumed that the reader would experience an onslaught of demonic attacks at the very start of his journey, simply for having shown the courage to undertake it.⁷ So, issuing a prescription similar to what can be seen in his other writings, Evagrius counsels the reader to learn how demons work: from the life of Jesus the reader should know that evil spirits are “crafty” and “shameless.” Evagrius also explains that demons show up in dreams, they take on various likenesses, they try to deceive and lead people astray, and *in extremis*, they throw rocks at those they cannot otherwise bother.⁸ In this letter, Evagrius offers a guide to the demonic activities that will greet a new practitioner, giving the same advice here in short form that he also offers in longer forms in his other more well-known works like the *Praktikos* and the *Antirrhetikos*.

What makes *Protrepticus* different is the fact that it suggests another, additional response to demonic attack, namely, that the reader should cultivate a useful emotional disposition by adopting the speech and personae of characters from Scripture. For in the *Protrepticus* Evagrius begins by offering a strategy he advises in the *Antirrhetikos*, namely, using phrases lifted directly from Biblical texts to be spoken as protection against the work of demons. Next, however, he advocates something more. Notice in the following passage how Evagrius’ instructions progress from the repetition of words of Scripture toward the imitation of the dispositions of characters mentioned in Scripture:

Always say before God: “I am dust and ashes.”⁹ “I am a worm and not a human being.”¹⁰ “I am the refuse of the world and the offscouring of all humanity.”¹¹ Think of yourself in comparison with others as an aborted fetus that is not fully grown; a dead dog; a worthless flea. Ask for mercies as the adulterous woman did.¹² Weep bitterly like Peter.¹³ Seek the small crumbs like the Canaanite woman.¹⁴ Speak from your whole heart, like

⁷ Muehlberger 2013: 38–9, 110–11.

⁸ Brakke 2006 makes clear how typical this is of the Evagrian ascetic program and Egyptian asceticism in general. See esp. 48–77.

⁹ Genesis 18:27. ¹⁰ Psalm 22:7. ¹¹ 1 Corinthians 4:13. ¹² John 8. ¹³ Matthew 26:75.

¹⁴ Mark 7:28.

By the end of this passage, Evagrius has stopped quoting Biblical speech for the reader to adopt verbatim. Instead, he brings characters from the Bible forward for the practitioner to imitate in their speech. Yet, to follow this advice, the practitioner must be the one to supply the words that the adulterous woman, or Peter, or David, was likely to have said: Evagrius counts on the person he advises in this letter to be capable of generating speech based on the known biographies of various Biblical characters. What is more, he asks that the reader do so in emotionally inflected ways – not that the reader simply recalls what Peter said and repeats it, or recalls what David said and repeats it, but that he imagines what it would be like to be these characters and in this way, to weep like Peter, or groan and mourn like David. Thus, in the *Protrepticus*, Evagrius suggests a novel imaginative exercise for his reader to adopt: not simply to repeat Scriptural words, but to generate the speeches and dispositions that can be imagined to cohere with what is known of certain Scriptural characters.

Evagrius also provides an extended example of what just such imagined words of a Scriptural character would look like. Later in *Protrepticus*, Evagrius explains that the reader should remain vigilant regarding pride, a vice which demons can easily use to their advantage as they try to distract the practicing ascetic. The best way to be vigilant, Evagrius writes, is for the reader to perform a speech inspired by the repentant tax collector in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, as told in Luke Chapter 18. Speaking of the varied tactics of Satan, Evagrius warns:

Take heed lest he steal you away by means of praise, or lest he puff you up in your own eyes and you swagger in your virtues like the Pharisee. Instead, humble yourself like the tax collector and, in likeness of him, strike your breast as you say: “God, have pity on me, a sinner.”¹⁶ God, forgive me my debts. Lord, purge me of my iniquity, which is great.

¹⁵ 2 Samuel 12:13. The entire passage is located in BM Add. 14578 154aβ-bα (Frankenberg 1912: 554);

[illegible]

¹⁶ Luke 18:13.

Though Evagrius does not explicitly name this exercise, the speech that he produces as an example can easily be identified as an instance of *ethopoeia*: the writer adopts a well-known character from a text known to both writer and audience and, on the basis of that character, invents a speech impersonating the character and inhabiting the character's dispositions, a task that demands an emotional performance by the writer. In other words, in *Protrepticus*, Evagrius has suggested the use of, and then has demonstrated the use of, one of the basic exercises in the rhetorical curriculum. For him, however, practicing *ethopoeia* upon certain Biblical characters is not just a writing exercise, but an appropriate and useful response to a difficult situation that late ancient ascetic Christians found themselves in: demonic assaults.

Rhetoric in Late Ancient Christian Texts

In its adoption by Evagrius, this exercise in *ethopoeia* is not all that far removed from its use in the rhetorical curriculum. The late fourth-century writer Aphthonius, a friend and perhaps student of Libanius of Antioch, describes *ethopoeia* in his *Handbook of Rhetorical Exercises* thus:

Ethopoeia (ἐθοποιία) is imitation of the character of a proposed speaker. There are three different forms of it: apparition-making (εἰδωλοποιία), personification (προσῶπο[p]οιία), and characterization (ἐθοποιία). *Ethopoeia* has a known person as speaker and only invents the characterization, which is why it is called “character-making”; for example, what words would Heracles say when Eurystheus gave his commands. Here Heracles is known, but we invent the character in which he speaks.²¹

The purpose of such an exercise is for the student to compose a speech based on what he knows of a common character, but not just any character. In practice, it is most often applied to characters who are experiencing

²¹ Aphthonius, *Preliminary Exercises* 11: *On Ethopoeia* (Ed. Rabe 1926: 34; Trans. Kennedy 2003: 115), Ἡθοποιία ἐστὶ μίμησις ἥθους ὑποκειμένου προσώπου. Διαφοραὶ δὲ αὐτῆς εἰσι τρεῖς, εἰδωλοποιία, προσωποποιία, ἡθοποιία. καὶ ἡθοποιία μὲν ἢ γνώριμον ἔχουσα πρόσωπον, πλαττομένη δὲ μόνον τὸ ἥθος· ὅθεν καὶ ἡθοποιία προσαγορεύεται· οἷον τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους Ἡρακλῆς Εὐρυσθέως ἐπιτάσσοντος· ἐνταῦθα ὁ μὲν Ἡρακλῆς ἔγνωσται, τὸ δὲ τοῦ λέγοντος ἥθος πλαττόμεθα. See the remarks about *ethopoeia* made by Aelius Theon, Ps-Hermogenes, Nicolaus, and Ps-John of Sardis, all collected in the same volume.

difficult situations.²² For instance, Aphthonius' example is Heracles when he first hears of the arduous labors he must perform; other surviving examples include responses to disastrous battles, emotional speeches given at the sight of a dead body, and words spoken before killing another person. Of the characters and situations for which an imagined speech could be generated, these sorts of very difficult, even wrenching, situations predominate among the surviving examples from Antiquity.

As Laura Miguélez-Cavero observes, "in the end, it is all about the *pathos*."²³ That is because, within the rhetorical curriculum, *ethopoeia* was, yes, a writing exercise, but it was also an exercise of moral development. Considering a character's terrible challenges certainly strengthened the imagination of a writer, but it also strengthened his resolve and his capacity for reasoned response, reserves he could call upon in future difficult situations of his own. As another ancient handbook of rhetoric professes, composing such imagined speeches for characters turns out to be "most advantageous in everyday life."²⁴ Developing equanimity and even leadership were goals that were as important to this system as developing a simple facility with words.²⁵

Though we do not have a formal account of Evagrius' education, from what we can reconstruct of his life as he moved from Asia Minor to Palestine to Egypt, we know he had a Classical education, or at the very least that he had completed the basic rhetorical curriculum. That much is clear from his peer network alone. In the early part of his life, people such as Basil of Caesarea solicited Evagrius for positions in their urban churches; later Gregory of Nazianzus asked him to go to Constantinople with him as part of his staff.²⁶ It is unlikely that Basil and Gregory would promote someone in this way who did not seem to them trained and prepared in the basic tasks of composition and persuasion.²⁷ Similarly, it is unlikely that Rufinus and Melania, who hosted Evagrius in Palestine,

²² In technical terms, most surviving *ethopoeiai* from Antiquity are of the "pathetic" type, meaning they are composed in response to highly charged situations.

²³ Miguélez-Cavero 2008: 319. ²⁴ Theon, *Exercises* 60 (Trans. Kennedy 2003: 4).

²⁵ For a demonstration of the importance of the mastery of *paideia*, see Elm 2012: esp. 60–143 where she discusses the role of the observable performance of education in Julian's claim to authority.

²⁶ Sinkewicz 2003: xvii–xviii.

²⁷ Brakke 2006: 48–9 discusses Gregory's influence on Evagrius. See also Bunge 1983: 215–27, 323–60.

would have found him a worthy guest in their elite community without such an education.²⁸

Some scholars have assumed that Evagrius stepped out of this common educational culture when he left Melania's small community and went to Egypt in 383 CE, but as Samuel Rubenson has argued, Evagrius' own description of his time in Egypt suggests that he experienced what he considered a seamless transition from one educational context to the other.²⁹ In the epilogue to the *Praktikos*, Evagrius describes his ascetic teachers in Egypt and Gregory, his teacher in Asia Minor, as two cultivators of the same plant, namely himself; he made no distinction between their methods of "cultivation," a fact that indicated he figured them both to be engaged in the same process.³⁰ From these hints, we know that Evagrius had a basic education, including the curriculum of rhetoric. We also know that education was a significant factor in his success before he moved to Egypt and, most important, that he saw his training in Egypt as a continuation of his earlier education.³¹ I offer, then, that Evagrius trusted that the practice of rhetorical exercises like *ethopoeia* would have a formative and beneficial effect on the students who enacted them, whether or not those students had ever experienced formal rhetorical training or could recognize such exercises as having originated in the rhetorical curriculum. That would help explain the presence of a very common rhetorical exercise like *ethopoeia* in not only the *Protrepticus*, but also a second work that I would like to explore, the *Paraeneticus*.

Paraeneticus

Like the *Protrepticus*, the *Paraeneticus* is an introductory letter, but it is aimed at a slightly more advanced practitioner. Rather than someone just starting out, the recipient of this letter has been participating in an

²⁸ Given the level of detail and refinement in textual work, it is difficult to see Rufinus as having developed his intellect outside the Classical system of *paideia*. See Chin's 2008 discussion of Rufinus in *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World*, particularly the chapter "Displacement and Excess," as well as Chin's two recent articles on Rufinus: "Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives: Translation as Origenism" (2010) and "Short Words on Earth: Theological Geography in Rufinus' *Commentary on the Apostle's Creed*" (2013).

²⁹ Rubenson 1993: 384–401 focuses on the theological continuity between the two arenas of Evagrius' life; the force of his argument applies all the more to the basic matrix that made exchange of theological ideas possible, the educational culture that Evagrius shared with his teachers.

³⁰ *Praktikos*, epilogue. ³¹ See also Lackner 1966: 17–29.

Evagrius-style program of discipline for a while; so much is clear from the letter's attention to those more deeply entrenched issues that develop once one has gotten over the initial difficulties of starting out. The specific problems it addresses are familiar to scholars who study Evagrius: as in his other writings, here he advises that it is necessary to discern one's thoughts, and that those thoughts that persistently suggest good things can be trusted to be from God; it is necessary that one should pray the Psalms; he teaches that there are multiple strategies to be undertaken against demonic attack; and he issues specific warnings about the subtle dangers of the demon of anger in particular.³²

In addition to these more typical suggestions, however, Evagrius reminds the recipient of the letter to use an imaginative exercise in generating a known character's speech to cultivate in himself the disposition most likely to sustain him through his difficulties. In the following passage from *Paraeneticus*, Evagrius tells the practitioner to put himself into the character of the hired worker, one of the figures in a famous parable from Matthew Chapter 20. In that parable, multiple workers are hired by a manager at different times of the day. When they are all paid the same wage by that manager at the end of the day, some of them grumble. There, the lesson is to avoid comparison with others, but here, in the *Paraeneticus*, Evagrius uses that tendency to compare oneself with others to inspire discipline, effort, and humility. He says to his reader:

Work at whatever you are competent to do, but after all of it, you should still think of yourself as a failed servant, since you have not been able to repay anything that you owe. Say to yourself, "I am a hired worker; why am I failing to complete my daily labor? I have been invited; why do I desist from the companionship of my friends? I owe a great debt; when will I repay it? My journey is long; when will I complete my road? and how will the provisions suffice for it? My Lord has sent for me – he wants me; when will I reach him? I must run; why am I loaded down with the burden of earthly things? I am bound by the fetters of the love of this world. My friends are vigilant, and I'm going to sleep? My friends are doing battle, and I'm going to be conquered? My friends are weeping, and I'm going to dance? My friends are distressed, and I'm going to rejoice? My friends are silent, and I'm going to speak? My friends are meditating on their Lord, his kingdom, and his glory, and I'm going to reflect on the very things that I promised to give up?" When you want to get up at the

³² In comparison, see the very similar ideas expressed in *On Thoughts* 7–8, 16, 19, 26, and 31; *To Eulogius* 9, 13, and 27; and *Praktikos* 20–6 and 38.

Though we can think of these examples of Evagrius' performance of *ethopoeia* as simple exercises in textual interpretation, doing so unnecessarily precludes our understanding of Evagrius' interaction with texts. We already know that Evagrius thought of Scriptural interpretation in the broadest of terms: he could consider Scripture as a technology for accessing the noetic realm, as Blossom Stefaniw has shown us.³⁴ He could also think of Scripture as an armory of weaponized passages to be deployed by monks against demons, as David Brakke's recent translation of *Antirrhethikos* has shown.³⁵ In addition to these uses, the two works we

[illegible]

³⁵ Brakke 2009 presents a published translation of *Antirrhetikos* entitled *Talking Back: A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons*, but see also Brakke's 2013 consideration of Evagrius' more general use of Scripture in "Reading the New Testament and Transforming the Self in Evagrius of Pontus."

have examined here adopt Scripture as a source of characters requiring detailed personification, an activity to be undertaken by the reader. What made one a successful student in the rhetorical curriculum, Evagrius assumed, could also, if correctly executed, lead to success in a difficult, disciplined program of practice. Wherever it was performed, and with whatever awareness of its origins the performer possessed, the practice of *ethopoeia* asked a person to consider moral and even emotional situations and potential responses, to think carefully of appropriate actions, words, and desires.

These are skills useful to the development of a rhetor and even to the development of a calm, intelligent approach to difficulty; such a disposition was, for Evagrius, as valuable to an ascetic practitioner as it was to a rhetorically well-trained speaker. While these two examples from *Protrepticus* and *Paraeneticus* are, so far, the only two examples of *ethopoeia* to be identified in Evagrius' work, there are hints that it was a consistent part of his method of working with students. Such hints are available in the surviving texts written by those who revered Evagrius and continued to use and adapt his method. For example, the Latin writer John Cassian, whose *Conferences* often included insights from the Evagrian method, appeared to understand the practice of reading Scripture as coming to its highest and best form when readers adopted the first-person voice of Scripture. Later students in Evagrius' lineage apparently took the exercise of giving voice to Scriptural characters to heart, as they composed pieces in imitation of the characters in Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs.³⁶

Conclusions

What becomes clear, then, is that Evagrius and other Christians in Late Antiquity did not consider the exercises of the rhetorical curriculum to be foreign to the practice of Christianity. Traditionally understood, *ethopoeia* was an exercise performed in limited situations – mostly, the rhetorical classroom – and on a limited set of characters: heroes and tragic figures from non-Christian, Classical Greek literature. Examples given by Libanius

³⁶ See Cassian, *Conferences* 10.11, as well as Evagrius, *On the Imitation of the Song of Songs* (CPG 2463), *On the Imitation of Ecclesiastes* (CPG 2464), and *On the Imitation of Proverbs* (CPG 2464a), all printed in Géhin 1996: 59–85. I am grateful to Nancy Linthicum for sharing her translation of these texts from the Arabic with me.

of Antioch, Severus of Alexandria, and Procopius of Gaza survive in which readers are asked to consider the deliberations of Medea before she killed her children, of Achilles looking at Patroclus' dead body and planning what to do next, of Ajax, of Menelaus, of Odysseus, or other Classic figures.³⁷ Although scholars have located the beginning of Christian *ethopoeic* exercises in the Byzantine period, it is certain that writers in Late Antiquity also had received training in rhetoric and had attempted *ethopoeiai* that took Scriptural characters as their starting point.³⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, one of Evagrius' teachers and mentors, used the exercise, adopting it in a sermon to help make vivid the feelings of the mother of a dead child, placing in her mouth the words of Job.³⁹ Luigi Pirovano has recently considered Jerome's introduction to his Latin translation of the Book of Esther, in which Jerome explains the additional material in the Septuagint's Book of Esther, as if it were the insertion of several examples of *ethopoeia*.⁴⁰ Most well-known are the two examples of *ethopoeia* among the Bodmer papyri, "What did Cain say when he had killed Abel" and "What did Abel say when he had been killed by Cain?"⁴¹ What we can see from this welter of examples is that the authors used the tools they possessed in order to make use of texts, whatever the content of those texts.

In summary, on the basis of the advice he has given in *Protrepticus* and *Paraeneticus*, I advocate that Evagrius should now join this list of those ancient Mediterranean Christians who found the traditional rhetorical exercise of *ethopoeia* to be a natural part of their reading and their practice. Christians in Late Antiquity used such exercises in many contexts: speech-making, school exercises, hagiography. In the case of Evagrius, he applied a rhetorical exercise to the situation of a person experiencing difficulty in discipline and prayer; because of his importance to monastic traditions in Late Antiquity, we can imagine this exercise as one of the options that monks turned to when they flagged in discipline. As more scholars trace

³⁷ See collected examples in Kennedy 2003 and Gibson 2008.

³⁸ The traditional understanding is that Christian *ethopoeiai* emerged only in the eleventh century, starting with the works of Nikephoros Basilakes; see Jean-Luc Fornet 1992: 264–5.

³⁹ *Oration* 14.11. ⁴⁰ Pirovano 2013.

⁴¹ Given that they cover typically pathetic topics and that they are both introduced by the typical first phrase of *ethopoeia*, these are exemplary instances. Both texts are available in Hurst and Rudhardt 1999: 122–3, 164b–171. Prior scholars' arguments that the Bodmer papyri could not have been collected by a monastery simply because of the presence of such "Classical" exercises are obviated by this article. For further arguments showing that "monastic" and "rhetorical" discourses are not mutually exclusive, see Krawiec 2012 and Leyser 1994, two pieces on John Cassian's use of rhetorical standards to make his presentation of Egyptian monasticism more attractive to elite audiences.

the influence of the rhetorical curriculum in all parts of this culture, it is important that we not assume its absence in Christian literature or more specifically ascetic literature. Instead, as I hope I have demonstrated, it is present in ascetic programs like those of Evagrius, and even functionally useful for the goals of such programs: both reinforcing certain dispositions and cultivating the ability to respond well to difficulty.

9 | Classical Education in Sixth-Century Coptic Monasticism

The Example of Rufus of Shotep

MARK SHERIDAN

At the Coptic Congress of 1996, Professor Raffaella Cribiore made the observation that “the writings of some Coptic authors betray much familiarity with the style of the Second Sophistic movement and the rules of rhetorical composition well known to the golden age of Patristic literature.” She observed further, “Later on, at the time of the patriarch Damianus, and even after the Arab conquest, a group of writers revived such rhetorical style in their Coptic literary production. It is likely that all these writers became well-acquainted with the Patristic literature and with a rhetorical education that apparently only the Greek schools could offer.”¹ In a footnote she mentioned John of Shmun and the panegyric of Macarius of Tkow attributed to Dioscorus. To this group of authors should be added Constantine of Assiut, Stephen of Hnes, and now Rufus of Shotep, whose homilies had not yet been published in 1996.²

Rufus was the Bishop of Shotep (known as Hypselis in Greek) in Upper Egypt, a metropolis near Lycopolis, in the late sixth century. His surviving works are text-based homilies in Sahidic. Most of the sermons that we have from this period are by or attributed to bishops. However, by the end of the fourth or early fifth century, most of the bishops were drawn from the monasteries.³ Therefore the sermons or homilies produced by bishops are indirect evidence of the influence of Classical *paideia* on early Egyptian monasticism. All of the authors mentioned so far were monks.

The text-based homily had been established as a distinct literary genre in Greek at least since the time of Origen. In any case, his text-based homilies based on *lectio continua* are the oldest surviving examples.⁴ By “text-based

¹ Cribiore 1999: 281.

² Sheridan 1998. For an appraisal of the rhetorical skills of Constantine of Assiut and Stephen of Hnes, see Sheridan 2011.

³ Giorda 2010: 112–16.

⁴ F. Siegert has argued on the basis of a few Jewish text-based homilies preserved in Armenian that the genre and praxis were common to Jews and Christians. It is far from clear that there is any

homily” is meant a sermon that offers a series of comments or explanations following the sequence of a Scriptural reading that has taken place. It is to be distinguished from a thematic or panegyric sermon. The thematic homily could be based on a Scriptural text, but does not follow the sequence of verses in its development.⁵

Different styles were considered appropriate for a panegyric sermon than for a homily. In the ancient world only Jewish celebrations, as they took place in the synagogues (not in the temple), and Christian religious celebrations required rhetorical activity. “Ancient religious celebrations normally kept worship separate from teaching.”⁶ However, this separation did not exclude the possibility of religious panegyric or speeches on religious matters before a public assembly or on the occasion of a festival. The gods could be the subject of an encomium and such speeches required the participation of professional speakers. There was also religious discourse on a colloquial level suited for the classroom or private gatherings, such as that developed by some philosophers. These two styles or categories found their Jewish and Christian counterparts in the panegyric sermon and the homily, both of which also corresponded to different occasions and audiences. Normally the style appropriate to the panegyric sermon was not seen as fitting for a homily: that is, an explanation of texts that had been read in the assembly, Jewish or Christian. A homily has also been defined as an address to an audience with whom the speaker is familiar.⁷ It is characterized by a conversational, colloquial style. That is certainly true of the homilies of Origen and John Chrysostom, the two Greek authors from whom we have preserved the largest corpus of homilies in Antiquity. The style appropriate for homilies was supposedly “unadorned.”⁸ The style suitable for an explanation of the readings, however, was not sufficient for the celebration of an important feast or the annual commemoration of a saint or martyr. It should be noted that the grand style did not necessarily mean an ornate or “Asiatic” style,

continuity between the Jewish practice and the Christian literary genre first found with Origen. This is not to deny the commonly accepted notion that the Christian liturgy of the word is rooted in Jewish synagogal practice. See Siegert 2003: 735–8.

⁵ Steiger 1996: 1510: “Thematische H. heißt eine Predigt, wenn sie lediglich den inhaltlichen Grundgedanken des Schrifttextes oder ein dort angesprochenes Thema aufgreift, um dieses in freier Weise anzuwenden, ohne jedoch dem logischen Duktus der Textstelle zu folgen.” On the history of the “homily,” see Sachot 1994: 148–75.

⁶ Siegert 1997: 421. ⁷ Siegert 1997: 441.

⁸ Steiger 1996: 3.1512: “Schließlich findet sich seit dem 4. Jh. n. Chr. die auch terminologisch saubere Unterscheidung zwischen der *homilia* als Schriftpredigt einerseits und dem *logos*, *lógos* als rhetorisch gestaltetem Vortrag andererseits.”

though this might be employed, and some Coptic encomia or panegyric sermons show its influence.⁹

Attention has been called to the fact that Origen made use in his homilies of at least one Classical rhetorical figure, that of the *chreia*, included traditionally among the *progymnasmata*.¹⁰ Karen Jo Torjesen has observed, “The prefaces to the exegetical sermons bear the closest resemblance to the rhetorical exercises for interpreting a pithy saying or anecdote attributed to some eminent personage.” She also notes that the transposition of this rhetorical practice from the Hellenistic civic culture into Christian religious culture resulted in significant modifications. First of all, the *chreia* citation is now from the Scriptures, not from the passage to be explained in the homily but from another passage of Scripture, through which Origen is able to state the thesis of the homily. For example, the thesis of the first homily on Jeremiah is given through the citation of Jonah 3:4, “God is quick to anger and slow to punish those who merit punishment.” The thesis for the second homily is introduced through the citation of Sap. 1:13–14, “God did not create death, nor does he take pleasure in the death of the living.”¹¹ The *chreia* was normally developed through several steps: thesis, example, citation, analogy, argument from the contrary, and exhortation. The Christianized *chreia* drew on examples from Scripture for these steps as well as for the statement of the thesis.

The *Chreia*

The homilies of Rufus of Shotep, although they are structured as text-based homilies, also show considerable influence from traditional Greek rhetorical practices, indeed more so than do those of Origen. None of these homilies has survived completely intact, but enough has survived to be able to identify various rhetorical elements. The first of these to be noted here is the use of the Christianized *chreia* as an introduction or preface to the

⁹ The term *asianismus* has been employed, *inter alia*, to designate a style using short rhythmic phrases and melodious assonances, often arranged in parallel. However, the term, though found in Antiquity in a polemical context opposing Asianic to Attic style, is not unproblematic. It was questioned by Wilamowitz-Möllendorff already in 1900. See Adamietz (1992) and Whitmarsh (2011). A similar critique has been made recently of the notion “second Sophistic.” See Toresillas (2007).

¹⁰ Kennedy 2003. *Chreia* is found in all four of the treatises reproduced by Kennedy: Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus. For more on the Classical use of *chreia*, see Hock and O’Neil 1986.

¹¹ Torjesen 1995: 13–25.

homilies. Unfortunately, the superscription and beginning of the first homily on the Gospel of Matthew are missing. The surviving text begins with the following passage:

πνε γαρ ἡτσαρζ̄ τεφσ̄ντε πε πλωρῆ πεφλωβω πε πτωλῆ πνε δε ἡτοϋ
 ἡπ̄νικον νογτειμινε αν πε. πτωβο πε πεφροογϋ πογοπ πε πεφλωκ εβολ.
 ογπι ναγαπн πε πεφασπασμος. πεγκτο ενεγереγ¹² πε τηρε ἡτιρηνη.

παῖ δε εφωανναγ̄ ετεγγχη εασπια ρητηπictic ρεντεςμ̄ηtkoγi εαςχι
 ηνεσμελος ρεντεγκραtia εασca φναμεpιtc ἡσιπлогος ετονρ̄ φναλωρ̄
 ηπεκμεεγε ἡφσοκ̄ ερογн εγμε ἡνογτε.

αγω ριnai εκωανχι ἡτεφκοινωνια ἡκβωκ ἡῖμαϋ ρῖῖμγστηpion εοηп
 κναωϋ εβολ ρωωκ ηοε ητεινγμфη ἡεκκλησιαctικη δετ̄χῖτ̄xηγ̄ ανοκ
 ρεντεφαγαпη ται ετενωληλ ετρεογον ηηп xпoc naϋ ἡφноγxe εβολ
 ἡτεпθγmia εтзооγ ηтепcωma ἡῖμεpeпeφnγμфиoc εтонρ̄ пcωтнp̄ тc
 xεepeteφγγχη naωωπε noγei ρωωc ρηηειωεepe φηη ετογнρ̄
 ἡcанeγωбeep naῖ εтраωe ηηmac epепnγμфиoc naλιtc ερογн
 eпeφkoιтωn. ρηптpecxоoc xεaпepo xιт ανοκ ερογн eпeφтаmиoн.
 пexaϋ xεтнnατεληλce ἡтeneγφpane ηρηte.¹³

As for the love of the flesh, its foundation is uncleanness; its consummation is defilement. Spiritual love, on the other hand, is not like this sort. Purity is its concern; sanctity is its end. A kiss of (Christian) love is its greeting. Their turning to one another is the bond of peace.

As for Him, if he sees the soul, having been tried [in the faith] from its youth, having kept its members in self-control, having become beautiful, the living Word will love her, he will touch your mind and draw you into divine love.

Afterwards, if you accept his fellowship and enter with him into the hidden mysteries, you also will cry out like this ecclesial bride, “I am wounded from his love” (Cant. 5:8). It is this that we pray everyone might bring forth to him, and cast out the evil desire of the body and love his living bridegroom, the savior Jesus, so that his soul also may become one among those maidens (cf. Cant. 1:3–4) who follow after their friend. It is these who rejoice with her when the bridegroom is about to take her into his bedroom. When she said, “The king has taken me indeed into his inner room,” he said, “We will exult and rejoice in you” (Cant. 1:4).¹⁴

¹² The text published in Sheridan 1998: 61 has been corrected here “Ex Codice Marciano Orientali 193 (10) Fragm. XX, fol. 1” (see Lucchesi 2002: 270), and from the printer’s proofs left by Mingarelli 1785. The date, however, cannot be correct, but must have been left uncorrected from the publication of the previous fascicle. Copies are to be found in Venice, Berlin, and Cambridge, MA.

¹³ The indications of defective and/or restored text have been omitted in order to facilitate the reading. For these, the reader is referred to the original edition, see Sheridan 1998.

¹⁴ The texts are cited here from Sheridan 1998: 61 (text), 127 (translation).

Here the *chreia* citation is provided by the texts from the Canticle to introduce the theme of initiation into hidden mysteries and intimacy with the Lord. This indicates the kind of interpretation that Rufus will be offering. He then cites the superscription to the Gospel beginning with his typical phrase “I hear then”:

†ϥⲱⲧⲏ ⲉⲉ ⲉⲣⲱϥ ϫⲉⲡⲗⲱⲙⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲗⲡⲟ ⲛⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲗϥ. ϣⲥⲙⲁⲙⲁⲁⲧ ⲡⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ
ⲡⲡⲁⲛⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲣ ⲡⲉⲱⲧ ⲡⲡⲉⲛⲗⲟⲓⲥ ⲧⲥ ⲡⲉⲗϥ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲣⲁⲁⲛ ⲛⲡⲱⲁ
ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲛⲙⲉⲱⲧⲧⲥⲱⲩⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲓⲉⲃⲁⲓⲉⲗⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁⲙⲁⲑⲓⲟⲥ ⲡⲧⲉⲛⲕⲱⲧϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ
ⲃⲙⲡⲉⲣⲏⲣⲉ ⲡⲧⲱⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲣⲏⲧⲟⲛ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲧⲉⲛⲕⲟϥⲓ ⲡⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲛⲁⲉⲱⲣⲓⲧⲥ
ⲉⲁⲛⲗⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥⲛ ⲉⲛⲧⲓⲣⲙⲉⲣ ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲡⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲉⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲧⲙⲁⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲏⲣⲟϥⲛⲟϥⲛⲟⲓⲏ
ⲕⲱⲧ ⲡⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲗⲓⲧϥ ⲛⲁⲥ ⲉⲣⲟϥⲛ ⲡⲟϥⲕⲱⲧ ⲉⲛⲁⲛⲟϥϥ ⲧⲣⲉϥⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲛⲉⲱⲱⲩ
ⲙⲡⲏⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉϥⲙⲧⲟⲛ.

I hear then, “The book of the generation of Jesus the Christ” (Matt. 1:1). Blessed be God, the almighty, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who has made us worthy to search out the field of this Gospel according to Matthew and to gather from the flower the dew of the text. It is this that our little mouths will be able to carry, which we have taken into the hives of your minds when the mother that is within intelligence has built that which has been brought into her into a fair dwelling to become “for kings and (common) men for health” (Prov 6: 8a–b LXX).¹⁵

We have here a rather elaborate *synkrisis* in which the preacher compares himself to a bee searching for nectar in the flowers of a field to take back to the beehive.¹⁶ The bee is inspired by Proverbs 6:8a–b, which is partially cited. The Gospel is the field and the hidden meanings are described as the “dew of the text,” which the preacher promises to extract and bring to the minds of the hearers, which are compared with the hives in which the queen bee dwells as within the *nous* or mind. The use of the bee in a *synkrisis* is rather common in Antiquity and there are numerous examples of Christian usage prior to Rufus, including Basil, Didymus, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria.¹⁷ This is the only example,

¹⁵ Sheridan 1998: 61–2 (text), 127–8 (translation).

¹⁶ On the use of *synkrisis* in Coptic encomia, see Sheridan 2011: *passim*.

¹⁷ For examples, see Sheridan 1998: 270–3. Basil of Caesarea uses the model of the wise bee as an example of how to draw what is useful from ancient writings. See Basil. Caes. *Or. ad adul.* 4. 8–10, and Naldini 2005: 93–5. Naldini observes that this similitude circulated among philosophers like a proverb. See pp. 166–7. Gregory of Nyssa offers another example of Christian usage in Homily 9 of his *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, citing also Prov 6:8. See Greg. Nyss. *Hom. in Cant. Cant.* 9 in Norris 2012: 281–5.

however, that I have found in which the preacher is the bee and the nectar refers to esoteric meanings.¹⁸

This passage is followed by a paraphrase that continues the theme of hidden meanings:

ΤΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΕ ΘΕ ΝΤΑΦΤΖΜΟΤ ΝΑΝ ΝΟΙΠΕΝΧΟΕΙΣ ΧΙΝΤΑΡΧΗ ΜΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ
ΕΑΝΗΟΥΤ ΜΤΕΦΠΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΟΥΑΝΤΕΝΠΩΖ ΕΖΡΑΪ ΕΜΜΕΡΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΡΟΕΙΣ ΕΡΟΟΥ
ΜΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΝΤΣΩΘΕ ΝΑΪ ΕΤΕΜΕΡΕΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΩΘΜΘΟΜ ΕΜΩΤΟΥ ΕΙΜΗΤΕΙ
ΝΕΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΜΠΧΟΕΙΣ.

Thus therefore has our Lord been gracious to us from the beginning of the gospel, when we have examined its superscription, until we reach the places which are being watched over by the Lord of the country. It is these that no one is able to search out except the heirs of the Lord.¹⁹

The paraphrase is followed in turn by a series of examples drawn from Scripture to illustrate the theme of hidden places to which only the “heirs of the Lord” have access:

ΑΪΩΤΜ ΓΑΡ ΕΡΟΥ ΕΦΝΑΚΑΠΡΩΜΕ ΖΗΜΠΑΡΑΔΙΣΟΣ ΕΦΖΩΝ ΕΤΟΟΤΥ
ΕΤΡΕΦΟΥΩΜ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΩΗΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΖΗΜΠΑΡΑΔΙΣΟΣ ΠΩΗΝ ΔΕ
ΕΣΟΥΗΝΠΕΤΝΑΜΟΥΥ ΜΝΠΠΕΘΟΟΥ ΕΤΡΕΦΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΡΟΥ ΕΤΜΟΥΩΜ ΕΒΟΛ
ΝΖΗΤΥ.

ΑΥΩ ΕΝΕΦΜΟΥΖ ΕΝΤΕΦΜΗΤΑΚΡΙΤΟΣ ΜΗΝΩΣ ΔΕ ΝΤΕΡΕΦΠΑΡΑΒΑ
ΝΤΕΝΤΟΛΗ ΑΥΤΡΕΠΕΧΑΙΡΟΥΒΙΜ ΜΗΤΣΗΦΕ ΝΣΑΤ ΕΡΟΕΙΣ ΕΤΕΖΗΝ ΜΠΩΗΝ
ΜΠΩΝΖ ΧΕΝΝΕΦΟΥΩΜ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤΥ ΝΥΩΝΖ ΖΗΤΕΙΠΑΡΑΒΑΣΙΣ.

ΠΑΛΙΝ ΟΝ ΤΣΩΤΥ ΕΡΟΥ ΖΗΠΚΩΤ ΜΠΗΪ ΖΗΕΖΕΚΙΗΛ ΕΦΝΟΥΧΕ ΕΒΟΛ
ΝΖΕΝΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΡΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΝΕΤΟΥΑΔΒ ΔΕ ΝΤΟΟΥ
ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΔΒ ΠΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ ΜΑΤΕ ΠΕ ΟΥΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΟΥ.

ΤΠΥΛΗ ΕΤΖΙΠΕΙΝΒΤ ΤΑΪ ΕΤΕΜΕΡΕΩΜΜΟ ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΣ Η ΝΣΕΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ
ΝΖΗΤΣ ΕΙΜΗΤΕΪ ΠΕΤΝΑΟΥΩΜ ΜΠΕΦΟΕΙΚ ΝΖΗΤΣ ΜΑΥΑΑΥ ΝΥΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ:

For I heard him as he was about to place the man in Paradise commanding him “to eat of every tree which was in Paradise but to take care not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:16–17).

¹⁸ Didymus the Blind, referring to the bee of Prov 6:8, does attribute an allegorical sense to the land flowing with milk and honey: “In the twofold sense, tropological and allegorical, the land worthy of blessing flows with milk and honey, from which come spiritual nourishment and good cheer, honey being the result of the bee’s display of God’s wisdom, according to the proverb recommending the industrious man in these terms: ‘Go to the bee and learn that it is a worker; it is held up as a model of esteem for wisdom, since both princes and peasants turn its labors to their good health; it is an object of desire and commendation.’ It is with this sweetness and milk that the holy land flows, the apostle giving the latter as drink to the infants in Christ.” Didymus, *Comm. in Zacch.* 2.215, see Hill 2006: 153.

¹⁹ Sheridan 1998: 62 (text), 128 (translation).

And when he was full of confusion after having broken the commandment, He caused the cherubim and the fiery sword to guard the way to the tree of life that he might not eat of it and live in that transgression (cf. Gen. 3:24).

Again I hear him during the building of the house in Ezekiel, setting forth the places that everyone may enter. But as for the holy of holies, it is the high priest alone who goes (cf. Heb. 9:7) in there.

As for the gate that is on the east (side), it is this one by which no stranger enters nor do they go out by it, except for the one who is to eat his bread in it alone (cf. Ezek. 44:3) and come out.

There follows the argument from analogy:

ⲛⲟⲉ ⲓⲁⲣ ⲛⲟϥⲏⲓ ⲛⲣⲓⲙⲁⲟ ⲉⲣⲉⲟϥⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲃⲏⲕ ⲉⲣⲟϥⲏ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲛⲉⲟⲣⲓⲛⲟⲛ
ⲛⲉⲧⲣⲓⲕⲓⲕⲓⲛⲟⲛ ⲟϥⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲕ ⲉⲣⲟϥⲏ ⲉⲣⲟⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲏⲡ ⲉⲡⲟⲓⲕⲱⲁⲉⲥⲡⲟⲧⲏⲥ
ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲓⲙⲓⲣⲁⲗ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲣⲓⲣⲉ ⲙⲏⲡⲉⲧⲕⲱⲗϥ ⲓⲙⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲙⲁⲛⲉⲛⲕⲟⲧⲕ ⲁⲉ ⲓⲡⲓⲕⲟⲉⲓⲥ
ⲙⲡⲏⲓ ⲏ ⲙⲙⲁⲓⲣⲱⲡ ⲓⲛⲉⲣⲉⲓⲁⲟⲥ ⲓⲛⲁⲛⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲙⲏⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲁⲉⲟⲩⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲡⲓⲙⲁ
ⲉⲧⲓⲙⲁϥ.

For it is like a rich man's house into which everyone enters. As for the forecourt, the atrium, the dining room, it is everyone who goes into them who is related to the master of the house, whether slave or free. There is no one who hinders them. But as for the bedroom of the lord of the house or the hiding places of his goods, of necessity not everyone will be able to go there.

And finally there is the general conclusion:

ⲧⲁⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲉⲉ ⲓⲛⲁⲡⲣⲟⲕⲣϥⲟⲛ ⲓⲡⲟϥⲧⲁⲁⲥ ⲛⲟϥⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲟⲱⲣⲉⲓ ⲓⲙⲟⲟϥ ⲏ
ⲉⲗⲟⲟϥ. ⲛⲁⲓ ⲓⲱⲱⲛ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲛⲉⲓ ⲉⲣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲗⲱⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲛⲟⲥ
ⲛⲉϥϭⲏ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲓⲧⲁϥⲱⲡⲉ ⲓⲣⲏⲧⲥ ⲁϥⲱⲗⲏⲗ ⲛⲣⲏⲧⲥ ⲉⲣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲣⲉⲓⲱⲧ
ⲓⲟⲓⲡⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲛⲡⲱⲣ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲱⲁⲉ ⲛⲓⲙⲙⲧⲏ ⲁⲛⲥⲁⲣⲱⲱⲛ ⲉⲡⲁⲣⲟϥ
ⲧⲉⲛⲟϥⲣⲟ ⲱⲁⲛⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁϥ ⲗⲉⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲉⲟⲩⲣⲣⲓⲛⲏⲓ ⲓⲙⲡⲓⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲏⲓ ⲓⲧⲓⲙⲁ
ⲓⲡⲓⲧⲁϥⲟϥⲣⲧⲥⲏⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲣⲉϥⲉⲱⲧⲓⲗⲱⲃⲱ ⲓⲡⲕⲱⲧ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲧⲉⲡⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲡⲁⲣϭⲏⲟⲥ
ⲓⲧⲧⲓⲥⲧⲥ. ⲙⲏⲡⲣⲉϥⲗⲱⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲓⲥ ⲛⲉⲗⲧ ⲛⲓⲕⲟⲉⲓⲥ.

This is the way it is with hidden things. It has not been given to everyone to see them or to speak them. It is these (things) that we have come to, that is, the subjects of the great prayer. It is this in which the savior dwelt and in it he prayed to his father. It is this that we have reached and, speaking to ourselves, we pull back meanwhile until we see that we will be able to become men of the household (cf. Gal. 6:10) in the great house honoring him who laid the foundation that he might be able to complete

the edifice: that is, the author and finisher of our faith Jesus the Christ our Lord (Heb. 12:2).²⁰

So far, the entire passage, of which the beginning is missing, has been directed to explaining the activity of the preacher rather than the text itself. It constitutes a very elaborate preface or what would be called an exordium in a panegyric sermon. It may be that this preface was conceived as an introduction to the entire series of homilies in order to explain the kind of spiritual interpretation that Rufus intended to offer.

Anaphora

However, there are other examples of an elaborate preface with the use of Christianized *chreia* in his homilies. Here only one will be noted. The superscription to the tenth homily states that the text being commented on is Matt. 4:17: "From that time on Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near'." The text opens with an elaborate *anaphora*:²¹

ΔΝΑΥ ΕΠΙΣΟΤΒΕΥ ΜΠΟΝΗΡΟΝ ΧΕΟΥΖΟΤΕΠΕ ΝΑΩ ΝΡΕ ΧΙΝΠΕΦΜΟΥΝΚ
ΜΠΑΤΟΥΧΡΩ ΜΜΟΥ ΕΕΙΡΕ ΝΤΕΦΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ. ΝΘΕ ΝΟΥΧΗΒΕ ΜΝΟΥΜΕΡΕΖ
ΕΩΔΑΚΖΕ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΕΥΖΔΡΟΤΕ ΜΠΑΤΕΦΧΙΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΟΤΥ ΕΠΟΛΕΜΕΙ ΝΖΗΤΟΥ
ΝΣΙΠΕΙΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΤΝΑ.

ΔΝΑΥ ΖΩΩΥ ΕΠΕΒΡΟΥ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΥ ΝΘΕ ΕΩΔΑΦΕΙ ΕΖΡΑΪ ΕΦΡΟΟΥΤ
ΧΙΝΤΕΦΖΟΥΕΙΤΕ ΜΠΑΤΕΦΝΟΥΧΕ ΕΖΡΑΪ ΜΠΕΦΚΑΡΠΟΣ.

ΔΝΑΥ ΟΝ ΕΠΟΥΡΟΤ ΜΠΕΚΛΟΜ ΜΝΤΕΦΤΕΡΨΙΣ ΧΙΝΕΡΕΠΤΕΧΝΙΤΗΣ ΕΡΖΩΒ ΕΡΟΥ
ΜΠΑΤΕΠΕΤΝΑΨΟΡΕΙ ΜΜΟΣ ΤΑΛΟΥ ΕΧΝΤΕΦΑΠΕ.

ΔΝΑΥ ΕΨΩΤΕ ΜΠΕΒΙΩ ΧΕΩΔΑΧΙΖΛΟΣ ΝΑΩ ΝΡΕ ΧΙΝΕΣΖΗΤΠΕ ΕΤΙ
ΕΣΖΗΤΜΗΤΡΑ ΜΠΑΗΡ ΜΠΑΤΕΣΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΕΧΜΠΕΧΟΡΤΟΣ ΕΤΡΕΦΒΙΤΣ
ΝΦΕΠΕΖΑΡΓΑΖΕ ΜΜΟΣ ΖΗΠΤΙΖΜΕΦ ΝΣΙΠΑΦ.

ΔΝΑΥ ΖΩΩΥ ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΦΟΝΖ ΝΘΕ ΕΤΕΦΤΖΛΟΣ ΕΠΜΑΔΧΕ ΝΝΕΤΣΩΤΜ
ΧΙΝΤΕΖΟΥΕΙ ΤΕ ΜΠΑΤΕΦΤΑΦΕΘΕΙΩ ΜΠΑΤΕΦΣΩΛΦ ΜΠΤΙΖΜΦ ΜΠΕΦΕΙΩ
ΝΤΕΣΒΩ ΝΦΤ ΕΡΩΟΥ ΝΝΕΤΝΑΧΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤΟΥ ΝΑΪ ΕΤΣΩΩΤ ΖΗΤΥ
ΜΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΟΝΖ ΕΥΩΔΑΝΧΙΤΠΕ ΜΜΟΥΥ ΩΔΑΥΩ ΕΒΟΛ · ΧΕ ΔΝΕΚΩΔΑΧΕ
ΖΛΟΣ ΖΗΡΩΪ ΠΑΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΑΡΑΠΕΦΕΪΩ.

²⁰ See note 14 above. The text here has been supplemented from Mingarelli, fasc.III, frag. XX: lxi, f.2.

²¹ The text has been arranged to emphasize the rhetorical structure. In the manuscripts the structure is sometimes emphasized by beginning each element of the *anaphora* with a larger letter.

Behold the evil weapon, how terrible it is (from the moment of) its manufacture before even it is needed to perform its function, like a sword and a spear which when you find them are fearful even before this merciless man takes them up to make war with them.

Behold also the good seed, how it comes up eagerly from the first before it puts forth its fruit.

Behold also the profusion of the wreath and its delight while the craftsman is still making it before the one who will wear it puts it on his head.

Behold the dew of the honey, how it acquires sweetness from being in the sky, while it is still in the womb of the air, before it comes down upon the grass for the bee to take it and work it in the hive.

Behold also the living word, how it gives sweetness to the ear of those who listen from the beginning even before he preaches, before he opens the hive of the honey of doctrine and puts (it) on the mouths of those who will receive from them. It is these who look toward him, to the living Word. If they taste them, they cry out, "Your words have been sweeter in my mouth, my God, than honey" (Ps. 118:103).²²

Presumably the preacher is referring to the text that has just been read. With the citation of Ps. 118, he takes up the theme of honey as a symbol for hidden meaning that had been exploited in the preface to the first homily. Unfortunately, except for the introductory words to the citation of Matt. 4:17, the text that should follow has been lost and so we do not know how Rufus tied this preface to the explanation of the text. In any case, from the point of view of rhetorical composition, this is a rather elaborate use of *chreia* combined with or in the form of an *anaphora*.²³

This passage is quite similar in style to two passages from another sermon that is possibly from the same period, of which only the first will be quoted here:²⁴

ΑΝΔΥ ΟΝ ΕΤΜΗΤΑΓΑΘΟΣ ΕΠΙΝΟΥΤΕ ΗΤΕΡΕΚΑΕΙΝ ΖΩΤΒ̄ ΝΑΒΕΛ ΠΕΥCΟΝ. ΔΥΚΩ
 ΝΟΥΜΑΕΙΝ ΖΙΧΩΥ ΧΕΝΗΕΛΔΔΥ ΖΩΤΒ̄ ΗΜΟΥ ΧΕ ΗΩΓΙC [f.102v2]
 ῬΗΜΕΤΑΝΟΙ ΗΥΚΩ ΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ:

²² See Sheridan 1998: 103–5 (text), 154 (translation).

²³ For the rhetorical device of *anaphora*, see Blasberg 1992: 542–5.

²⁴ Bernardin 1937: 113–29; Depuydt 1993: 348 (no. 170, 7). The manuscript is M595, ff. 100v–108r. CPG 2184: *In passionem*. Coptic clavis 0051. On the basis of content, Orlandi suggested a fourth- to fifth-century, possibly Greek, original without excluding the possibility of a Coptic original. However, on the basis of rhetorical style similar to that of another pseudo-Athanasian composition, *De Lazaro e mortuis reuocato*, an original Coptic composition of the sixth century seems possible. See Sheridan 2007: 37–9.

ΑΝΑΥ ΟΝ ΕΤΗΝΤΑΓΑΘΟΣ ΗΠΕΙΩΤ ΗΤΕΡΕΦΕΙΝΕ ΗΠΑΤΑΚΛΗΣΜΟΣ
ΕΧΗΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΝΩΤΑΚΕΣΑΡΖ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΒΕΝΕΥΧΙΝΘΟΝΘ ΜΗΝΕΥΑΝΟΜΙΑ ΑΥΩ
ΗΤΕΡΕΦΗΝΑΥ ΕΨΑΡΖ ΗΨΡΩΜΕ ΕΥΝΗΧ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΜΟΟΥΤ ΠΕΧΑΥ ΧΕΛΙΡΕΤΗΙ
ΧΕΛΤΑΚΕΠΚΑΡ:

ΑΝΑΥ ΟΝ ΕΤΗΝΤΑΓΑΘΟΣ ΗΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΕΜΩΨΗΣ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ ΗΜΟΥ ΧΕΩΧΕ
ΑΪΘΙΝΕ ΝΟΥΧΑΡΙΣ ΗΠΕΚΗΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΟΥΟΝΕΪ ΝΑΪ ΕΒΟΛ ΤΑΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΚ.

ΑΝΑΥ ΧΕΑΦΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΖΙΧΗΠΤΟΟΥ ΨΙΝΑ ΑΦΑΖΕΡΑΤΩ ΑΦΟΥΩΝΕΪ ΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ
ΗΠΕΣΜΟΤ ΗΠΕΦΕΟΟΥ. ΟΥΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΑΦΠΘΕ ΗΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΟΥΧΘΕΙΣ ΕΦΘΟΛΕΪ
ΗΠΕΦΕΪΖΑΛ:

Behold, again, the goodness of God when Cain killed Abel his brother. He put a sign upon him in order that no one might kill him, because perhaps He will repent and forgive him (Gen. 4:15).

Behold, again, the goodness of the Father when He brought the flood upon the world and destroyed all flesh on account of their wrongs and lawlessness (Gen. 6:17). And when He saw the flesh of man abandoned and dead, He said: "I have repented that I destroyed the earth" (Gen. 9:8).

Behold, again, the goodness of God when Moses besought Him: "If I have found favor in Your sight, reveal Yourself to me that I may see You" (cf. Exod. 24:16).

Behold, He came down upon Mount Sinai and stood and revealed to him the appearance of His glory – a God Who obeyed a man; a Lord Who comforts His servant.

Such passages from a pseudonymous homily of possibly contemporaneous origin have been mentioned to reinforce the idea of a rhetorically sophisticated milieu, as suggested by Cribiore.

Rufus himself makes frequent use of *anaphora* throughout his homilies. At the end of the eighth homily on Matthew [41. B9] we find another *anaphora* in a concluding peroration with a series of citations of Biblical figures:

ΑΤΕΤΝΩΤΗ ΕΤΒΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΗΤΑΦΔΙΑΛΟΝΕΙ ΕΖΗΛΙΑΣ ΕΦΕΝΟΕΙΚ ΝΑΥ ΕΦΟΥΩΜ
ΖΙΜΟΥ ΕΦΩ:

ΑΤΕΤΝΩΤΗ ΕΤΒΕΠΕΝΤΑΦΔΙΑΚΟΝΕΙ ΕΔΑΝΙΕΛ ΕΑΦΒΙ ΝΑΜΒΑΚΟΥΜ
ΗΨΠΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΕΑΦΧΙ ΜΜΟΥ ΦΑΡΟΥ ΕΠΩΗΙ ΝΗΜΟΥΪ:

ΑΤΕΤΝΩΤΗ ΕΤΒΕΠΩΟΜΗΤ ΗΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΗΘΕ ΗΤΑΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΒΩΚ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ
ΕΤΕΡΡΩ ΑΦΩΩΪ ΗΠΩΑΖ ΗΠΚΩΕΤ ΖΑΡΟΥ:

ΑΤΕΤΝΩΤΗ ΕΤΒΕΝΕΖΟΥΪ ΨΙΝΑΧΕΡΙΜ ΗΘΕ ΝΤΑΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΗΠΧΘΕΙΣ ΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ
ΑΦΜΟΥΟΥΤ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΕΝΤΠΑΡΕΜΒΟΛΗ ΗΝΑССΥΡΙΟΣ ΗΜΝΤΒΩ\ΜΗΝ
ΝΤΒΑΟΥΘΟΣ ΝΟΥΟΥΩΗ ΝΟΥΩΤ:

ⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛⲥⲱⲧⲏ ⲉⲓⲉⲓⲥⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲭⲉⲛⲉⲣⲉⲡⲧⲟⲟϥ ⲙⲉⲗ ⲛⲉⲗⲧⲟ ⲉⲓⲗⲁⲣⲙⲁ ⲛⲕⲱⲗⲧ
 ⲉϥⲃⲟⲛⲟⲉⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲡⲣⲟⲩⲏⲧⲏⲥ:
 ⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛⲥⲱⲧⲏ ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲡⲁⲓⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲁⲕⲟϥⲱⲛ ⲛⲏⲣⲟ ⲛⲡⲉⲱⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲱⲛ
 ⲁⲕⲉⲛⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲱ ⲁⲕⲡⲁⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲱⲁⲛⲥ ⲁⲕⲉⲣⲃⲏⲧ ⲁⲕⲙⲟϥ.
 ⲧⲁⲓ ⲟⲛ ⲧⲉⲟⲉ ⲧⲉⲛⲟϥ ⲉⲛⲉ ⲙⲏⲡⲉⲧⲙⲱⲉ ⲉⲭⲱⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲉϥϭⲡⲉ ⲁϥⲟⲙⲕⲉⲛ ⲉⲛⲟⲛⲉ
 ⲛⲥⲓⲛⲉⲧⲧⲟϥⲃⲏⲛ. ⲣⲁⲱⲉⲥⲉ ⲧⲉⲛⲟϥ ⲡⲗⲁⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲛⲕⲉⲙⲃⲟⲙ ⲉⲓⲛ[...]
 ⲛⲕⲥⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲙⲱⲉ ⲉⲭⲱⲛ ⲉⲙⲏⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁ ⲉϥⲧⲟϥⲃⲏⲛ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ
 ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲕⲙⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲣⲟϥⲟ ⲁⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲕⲧⲱⲟϥⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛⲛⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟϥⲧ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲟⲛ
 ⲉⲧⲉⲓⲟϥⲛⲁⲙ ⲛⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲁϥⲱ ⲉⲧⲥⲏⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲗⲣⲟⲛ. ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲡⲟⲣϭⲏ
 ⲉⲧⲁⲓⲁⲡⲏ ⲙⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ.
 ⲡⲁⲓ ⲡⲉⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲙⲏⲡⲁⲙⲁⲗⲧⲉ ⲙⲏⲧⲉϭⲟϥⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲗⲁⲉ ⲛⲏⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲏⲡⲉⲣⲉⲓⲱⲧ
 ⲛⲁⲓⲁⲟⲥ ⲙⲏⲡⲉⲧⲏⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲟϥⲁⲁⲃ ⲱⲁⲉⲛⲉⲗ ⲛⲉⲛⲉⲗ ⲉⲗⲁⲙⲏⲛ.

You have heard about the angel who ministered to Elias bringing bread to him to eat and water to drink (cf. 1 Kgs 19:5).

You have heard about the one who ministered to Daniel when he carried Habakuk and the lunch he had fixed for him in the lion's den (cf. Dan. 14:34).

You have heard about the three holy ones, how the angel came down to the furnace and quenched the flames of the fire around them (cf. Dan. 3:49).

You have heard about the days of Sennacherib, how the angel of the Lord came and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred eighty-five thousand in a single night (cf. 2 Kgs 19:35).

You have heard about Eliseus, that the mountain was filled with horses and chariots of fire helping the prophet (cf. 2 Kgs 6:17).

You have heard about the angel who opened the doors of the prison at night and brought Peter out (cf. Acts 12:7) and he struck Herod and he was worm-eaten and died (cf. Acts 12:23).

This is also how it is now. If there had been no one who fights for us, then those who fight against us would have swallowed us up alive (cf. Ps. 123:2–3). Now then, rejoice, you just people, and be strong [...] and bless God who fights for us, since there is no one who will be able to prevail against us. “It is the Christ who has died who is all the more the one who has risen from the dead. He it is also who is at the right hand of God and who intercedes for us. Who is it who will separate us from the love of God?” (Rom. 8:34).

To him be the glory and the power and the dominion before all ages with his good Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.²⁵

In another homily on the sixth beatitude (Matt. 5:8) there is an *anaphora* of Biblical citations or citations of Biblical figures:

²⁵ See Sheridan 1998: 97 (text), 149 (translation).

ΔΙΩΤΗ ΕΙΔΩΒ. ΕΦΧΩ ΉΜΟΣ ΧΕ
ΔΙΝΑΥ ΕΠΧΘΕΙΣ ΔΟΥΧΑΙ ΝΟΙΤΑΨΥΧΗ.
ΔΙΚΤΟΙ ΟΝ ΔΙΩΤΗ ΕΡΟΨ ΧΕΝΕΤΕΡΕΨΑΔΤ ΝΟΙΠΕΙΝΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ.
ΔΙΩΤΗ ΕΠΝΟΨ ΝΑΡΧΗΠΡΟΨΗΤΗΣ ΜΩΨΗΣ ΕΦΑΪΤΕΙ ΝΝΑΥ ΕΠΡΟ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ
ΜΝΕΨΕΨΟΜΟΝ ΕΝΑΥ
ΠΕΧΑΨ ΓΑΡ ΝΑΨ ΧΕΨΝΕΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΥ ΕΠΑΨΟ ΝΨΩΝΨ.
ΔΙΝΑΥ ΟΝ ΕΨΗΛΙΑΨ ΕΨΕΠΕΨΝΑ ΕΨΩΟΜΕ ΝΑΠΑΡΑΓΕ ΉΜΟΨ ΠΑΪ
ΕΤΕΡΕΠΕΨΝΑ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΨΗΤΨ ΤΕΨΠΝΟΗ ΝΛΕΨΤΗ.

I heard Jacob say: “I have seen the Lord; my life has been preserved” (Gen. 32:31 LXX).

I turned back again and I heard: “When the likeness of God passed by me” (Gen. 32:32).

I heard the great archprophet Moses asking to see the face of God and he was not able to see, for

He said to him: “Man shall not see my face and live” (Exod. 33:20).

I also saw Elias when the subtle spirit was about to pass by him. It is this in which was the spirit of God, this light breath (cf. 1 Kgs 19:12 LXX).²⁶

Antitheton

Rufus also made use of other rhetorical forms including antithesis (*antitheton*), *apostrophe*, the rhetorical question, and the imaginary interlocutor. The latter had been used even by Origen in his homilies. Part of the exordium of the fifth “exegesis” on Luke 1:26–7 contains a set of antitheses (*antitheton*):²⁷

ΑΨΝΑΥ ΕΠΧΑΧΕ ΧΕΨΗΠΟΚΡΙΝΕ ΨΝΟΥΨΟΤ ΜΗΗΤΜΑΨΡΩΜΕ (sic).
ΕΨΤΙ ΜΠΕΨΟΥΟΙ ΕΡΟΗ ΨΜΨΨΜΒΟΛΟΨ.
ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΔΕ ΔΨΟΥΕΝΕΨΤΕΨΑΓΑΠΗ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΨΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΗ ΨΩΨ ΝΟΥΤΕ
ΝΑΓΑΘΟΨ. ΕΨΚΩΨ ΜΝΟΥΒΩΛ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΧΑΧΕ.

²⁶ See Sheridan 1998: 113 (text), 158 (translation).

²⁷ For the rhetorical device of *antitheton*, see Villwock 1992: 1.722–50. *Antitheton* is a more complex figure than *anaphora* involving a series of antitheses or contrasts, which often have a philosophical or theological basis, as in this case. For varieties of *antitheton*, see also Lausberg 1990: §§787–807. Villwock, “Antithese,” notes the connection between *antitheton* and “typology,” tracing it back to Marcion and mentioning the contrast of Eve and Mary without, however, giving any specific patristic examples (col. 732). It should be noted that the word “typology” is a modern notion and is never found in ancient texts, although the word “typos” is used, often with the same meaning as allegory. Others prefer to view “typology” as a subdivision of allegory.

ΠΡΟΣΘΕ ΝΤΑΙΩΡΠΧΟΟС. ΑΠΔΙΑΒΟΛΟС ΦΘΟΝΙ ΕΡΟΝ ΕΦΙ ΝΤΟΟΤΗ
 ΝΤΗΜΝΤΖΜΖΛ. ΑΠΠΟΥΤΕ ΤΑΖΜΕΝ ΕΤΗΗΤΩΗΡΕ.
 ΑΠΧΑΔΕ ΤΡΕΥΝΟΧΝ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΠΠΑΡΑΔΙСОС.
 ΑΛΛΑ ΑΠΧΟΕΙC ΟΥΩΝ ΝΑΝ ΝΤΠΥΛΗ ΝΤΠΕ
 ΑΥΠΟΝΗΡΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΝ ΖΗΠΠΑΡΑΔΙСОС ΝΤΕΤΡΥΦΗ
 ΑΛΛΑ ΠΕΝΤΑΥΠΟΝΗΡΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΝ ΖΗΠΠΟΠΟC ΝΤΕΝΑΝΑΠΑΥCΙC. ΑΥΝΟΧΥ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΖΗΜΠΗΥΕ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΧΗΚΑΖ. ΑΥΥΙΤΚ ΖΩΩΚ ΠΡΕΜΕΚΑΖ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΤΠΕ.

He saw that the enemy was dissembling in the guise of a friend of
 mankind approaching us as the counselor.
 But God revealed his love toward us as a good God
 to the envy and consternation of the enemy.
 As I said before, the devil envied us, carrying us into slavery;
 God summoned us to sonship.
 The enemy let us be cast out of Paradise,
 but the Lord opened the gate of heaven to us.
 We were wronged in the Paradise of delight, but the one who acted
 wickedly toward us in the place of our rest was thrown out of the
 heavens down upon the earth, and you, the man of earth, were taken
 up to heaven.²⁸

And from the same introduction to the same fifth “exegesis” we have another example of *antitheton*:

ΝΤΑΕΥΖΑ ΟΥΕΖΖΗΤC ΕΤΗΝΤΟΛΗ ΜΠΠΑΡΑΔΙСОС.
 ΜΑΡΙΑ ΖΩΩC ΝΤΑCΩ ΜΠΩΝΖ ΖΗΠΕΡΠΕ.
 ΕΥΖΑ ΝΤΕΡΟΥΘΑΔΕ ΝΗΜΑC ΖΙΤΗΠΖΟΒ. ΑCΟΥΩΩΒ ΝΑΥ ΑΧΗΜΟΥΧΤ
 ΜΑΡΙΑ ΖΩΩC ΑCΩΡΧ ΜΜΟC ΖΗΤΕCΓΙΝΟΥΩΩΒ ΝΑΥ ΑCΟΥΟΝΖΥ ΕΒΟΛ.
 ΑCΜΠΩΑ ΝΤΠΙCΤΙC ΑΥΩ CΟ ΝΖΟΤΕ ΠΕΤΟΥΝΑΤΑΑΥ ΝΑC.
 ΕΥΖΑ ΟΥΖΟΒΠΕ ΝΤΑΥΩΑΔΕ ΝΗΜΑC ΑΥΑΠΑΤΑ ΜΜΟC
 ΜΑΡΙΑ ΖΩΩC ΕCΕΙΡΕ ΜΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΝΤΕΝΑΥΑΠΑΤΑ ΜΜΟC ΑCΩΡΧ
 ΝΗΕCΩΑ ΔΕ. ΛΟΙΠΟΝ ΑCΟΥΩΩΒ ΖΗΟΥΠΑΡΑΔΥΡΙCΙC ΜΗΟΥΤΙΖΗΤΗΥ.

It was against the command of Paradise that Eve set her heart.
 It was in the temple that Mary, for her part, conceived life.
 Eve, when she was spoken to by the serpent, answered without
 consideration (thoughtlessly). Mary, on the other hand, was firm
 when she answered him. She showed him that she was worthy of the
 trust and she is in awe of what would be given her.
 With Eve, it was a serpent that spoke to her and he deceived her.

²⁸ Sheridan 1998: 189 (text), 228 (translation).

Mary, on the other hand, was mindful of her who had been deceived and she confirmed her words. Moreover she answered with discernment and prudence.²⁹

There follows as part of the same commentary in the fifth “exegesis” a description of Mary in anaphoric style, which forms a kind of counterpoint to the antitheses describing Eve earlier in the exordium:

ΟΥΝΟΜΘΕΤΗΣ ΤΕ ΤΠΑΡΘ̅ ΕΣΣΟΟΥΝ ΕΠΝΟΜΟΣ ΜΗΝΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ. ΠΩΔΞΕ
ΝΤΑССОТМЕҢ.
ΑΣΧΙΤΥ ΕΝΘΕ ΝΟΥΝΟΥÇ ΕΠСОТӢ. ΑΥΩ ΕΥΤΑΗΥ.
ΑΣΧΙΤΥ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΑΝΤΙΖΑΠ ΕΤΟΡ̅ ΝΤΕΠЕСМΕҢҢ.
ΑΣΠΑΣΤΥ ΚΑΛΩС ЗМПКΩҢТ МПЕСЛОГІСМОС.
ΑΣΟΥΟҢТΥ ЗНТΔΙΑΚРНСІС МПЕСМΕҢҢ.
ΑΣΔΟΚΙΜАЗЕ ΔΕ ΟΥΑΩ ΜΗΝΕ ΠΕ ΠАСПАСМОС.
ΑΣΤΑҢЕПЕСНОУС ЕРАТΥ НӨЕ ΝΟΥКЕВЕРНІТΗΣ ΕΝΑΝΟΥÇ ΕΦΑΜΑҢТЕ ΜΠΕҢІНІЕ
ЗНОУΩРХ. ΜΗΠΟТЕ ΝΤΕΤООТΥ ΖΙСЕ. ΝΤΕΠЕҢХОІ ВОК ЗАСІЕ ТАІТЕӨӨ
НТАТПАРӨЕНОС АМАҢТЕ МПЕСЛОГІСМОС. ΜΠЕСМОКМЕК ЗНОУТІҢТНУ
МНПОТЕ НСОУАΩВ ЗНОУМНТРЕҢВОСС ЕВОЛ НСХЕПАҢҢІН ТНҢУ ЕВОЛ
НМТΩ.

The Virgin is learned in Scripture, knowing the law and the prophets.

The word that she heard:

She received like choice and precious gold.

She took it into the secure place of judgment of her thought.

She refined it well in the fire (cf. Sir 2:5?) of her reason.

She cast it in the discernment of her thought.

She examined what sort of greeting this was.

She set her mind to it, just as a good steersman takes firm hold of his rudder lest its handle be unmanageable and his boat be shipwrecked. So the Virgin took hold of her reason and her thought with attention lest she answer impetuously and take the whole cargo to the bottom.³⁰

Here Rufus is also introducing a comparison (*synkrisis*) with the pilot or steersman (ΚΕΒΕΡΝІТΗΣ), a rather common comparison in other Coptic texts (e.g., Silvanus).

The angel Gabriel then reads Mary’s thoughts and dialogues with them. This involves the use of or adaptation of yet another of the *progymnasmata*,

²⁹ Sheridan 1998: 191 (text), 229 (translation). ³⁰ Sheridan 1998: 197 (text), 231 (translation).

ethopoeia or *prosopoeia*.³¹ Here Mary does not actually speak, but her thoughts are described:

ΛΟΙΠΟΝ ΤΙΣΩΤΗ ΕΡΟΨ ΧΕΝΤΕΡΕΨΩΚ ΝΑΣ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΠΕΧΑΨ ΝΑΣ ΧΕΧΕΡΕ
 ΤΕΝΤΑΣΟΝΖΜΟΤ ΠΧΘΕΙC ΝΗΜΕ.
 ΟΥΠΕ ΠΙΒΩΚ ΝΑΣ ΕΖΟΥΝ. ΕCΤΩΝ ΝΟΙΜΑΡΙC. ΑΛΛΑ ΕΙΚΗ ΑΝ ΔΨΤΑΨΕ ΠΑΙ.
 ΕΡΕΠΛΟΓΟC ΤΑΜΟ ΜΗΟΝ ΕΠΖΩΠ ΝΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC. ΜΗΠΡΙΖΟΥΝ ΕΤΕCΠΟΛΥΤΙΑ.
 ΜΗΠΕCΘΡΕΖΤ ΕΤΕCΕCΥΧΙΑ.
 ΤΑΙ ΝΤΑCΕΜΠΩΑ ΝΟΥΑCΠΑCΜΟC ΝΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΧΕΧΕΡΕ ΤΕΝΤΑΣΟΝΖΜΟΤ
 ΠΧΘΕΙC ΝΗΜΕ. ΠΑCΠΑCΜΟC ΕΤΗΠΕΛΑΔΥ ΜΑΤΕ ΜΗΟΨ ΕΝΕΖ.
 ΕΙΜΗΤΤΙΡΕΨΧΠΕΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΑΥΑΑC.

Further on I hear, “When he went in to her, he said to her, ‘Hail, you who have found favor. The Lord be with you’” (Luke 1:28).

What is this “going into her?” Where is Mary? But it is not without reason that he has mentioned this, since the text is informing us of the hidden (life) of the Virgin and of her interior way of life and of her quiet tranquility.

As for this woman, it is an angelic greeting that she is worthy of – “Hail, you who have found favor. The Lord is with you.” – This greeting which no one else ever enjoyed, except the begetter of God alone.

This leads to reflection on the part of Mary: that is, the angel is reading her mind:

ΝΤΟC ΔΕ ΔCΩΤΟΡΤΡ ΕΧΗΠΩΑΧΕ ΠΕΧΑΨ. ΔCΕΡΡΟΤΕ ΝΧΝΟΟΥ. ΔCΕΨΠΗΡΕ
 ΜΠΑCΠΑCΜΟC ΖΩC ΕΨΧΠΟ ΝΟΥΜΗΤΩΒΗΡ. ΔΨΩ ΔCΑΚΟΜΙ ΕΧΝΟΥΨΑΧΕ
 ΕΨΘΗΝ ΖΩC ΕΨΜΕΖΜΗΜΗΤΜΑΙΡΩΜΕ. ΔΨΩ ΝΕCΜΟΚΜΕΚ ΜΗΟC ΧΕΟΥΠΕ ΠΖΩΒ
 ΝΟΥΖΟΟΥΤ ΕΨΩΑΧΕ ΜΗΟΥCΖΙΜΕ. CΩΨΤ ΜΕΝ ΕΠΕCΧΗΝΑ ΖΩC CΕΜΝΟC.
 ΟΥΑΓΓΕΛΟC ΓΑΡ ΠΕ ΕCΝΑΨ ΕΡΟΨ ΕΟΥCΜΟΤ ΝΡΩΜΕ ΠΕ. ΔCΜΟΚΜΕΚ ΛΟΙΠΟΝ
 ΧΕΟΥΑΨ ΜΗΙΝΕ ΠΕ ΠΑCΠΑCΜΟC. ΜΗ ΔΡΑ ΠΕΧΑC ΕΨΕΡΖΑΛ ΜΗΟΙ ΖΜΠΕΡΖΑΛ
 ΝΤΑΨΕΡΖΑΛ ΕΤΗΑΔΥ ΉΠΑΓΕΝΟC ΧΙΝΕΨΟΡΠΙ ΔΨΩ ΔCΩΤΟΡΤΡ.

Now as for her, she was disturbed over what he said. She was afraid of asking. She was amazed at this greeting as though it evoked familiarity and she became alert at a speech which was soft as if full of human affection and she was wondering what business has a male speaking with a woman. She regards indeed the outward appearance as worthy of respect for it is an angel she sees in the likeness of a man. She considered

³¹ See Naschert 1994: 2.1512–16. For the treatment of this figure in the *progymnasmata*, see Kennedy 2003: 47 (Aelius Theon), 84 (Hermogenes), 115 (Aphthonius), and 164 (Nicolaus the Sophist). Hermogenes distinguishes between personifying a thing (*prosopoeia*) and imagining “words for a real person” (*ethopoeia*). He also distinguishes between ethical and pathetic personifications. Those introduced by Rufus belong to the ethical category since they correspond to the character of Mary.

further what sort of greeting this was. “May it not be,” she said, “that I am being deceived by the deception with which the mother of my race was deceived in the beginning,” and she was disturbed.

There follows then more description of her thoughts and pondering, and then the angel answers her thoughts:

ΝΗΘΟΝ ΔΕ ΕΣΜΟΚΜΕΚ ΖΗΝΑΙ ΑΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΟΥΩΩΒ ΠΕΧΑΦ ΝΑC. ΧΕ ΜΠΕΡΡΖΟΤΕ ΜΑΡΙΑ. ΑΡΩΙΝΕ ΓΑΡ ΝΟΥΖΜΟΤ ΝΝΑΖΡΗ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ. ΝΤΑΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΟΥΩΩΒ ΜΠΩΑΧΕ ΔΝ ΜΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΠΕCΩΑΧΕ ΓΑΡ ΑΛΛΑ ΝΤΑΦΟΥΩΩΒ ΜΠΕCΜΕΕΥΕ. ΑΦΕΙΜΕ ΓΑΡ ΕΠΕCΜΕΕΥΕ. ΔΦΕΠΑΙΝΟΥ ΜΠΩΡΧ ΝΤΕCΨΥΧΗ. ΔΦΩΠΗΡΕ ΔΕ ΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΦΤΝΝΟΟΥΦ ΥCΟΟΥΝ ΓΑΡ ΧΕΟΥΑΦ ΜΜΙΝΕ ΠΕ ΠΕΝΤΑΦΤΝΝΟΟΥΦ ΩΑΡΟC ΕΦCΟΟΥΝ ΕΠΩΡΧ ΝΤΕCΨΥΧΗ ΕΤΒΕΠΑΙ ΟΥΕΙ ΤΕ ΤΟΥΩΑΧΕ ΕΤΒΗΗΤC ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΟΥΜΗΗΩΕ. ΟΥΕΙ ΤΕ ΝΤΑΥCΟΤC ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΖΑΖ ΤΑΙ ΕΤΕΡΕΗCΑΙΔC ΤΕΚCΤΗΗΒΕ ΕΡΟC. ΧΕΕΙC ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC ΝΑΩ ΝCΧΠΟ ΝΟΥΩΗΡΕ ΝCΕΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΠΕΦΡΑΝ ΧΕΕΜΜΑΝΥΗΛ ΕΑΦΧΕΠΑΙ ΖΑΘΗ ΝΟΥΜΗΗΩΕ ΝΓΕΝΕΑ ΖΙΤΗΠΕΠΙΝΑ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ. ΕΦΧΩ ΜΜΟC ΧΕΕΙC ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC ΝΑΩ ΝCΧΠΟ ΝΟΥΩΗΡΕ. ΖΩC ΧΕ ΟΥΕΙ ΤΕ ΖΜΠΚΑΖ ΤΗΡΦ.

While she was pondering these things thus, the angel answered and said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God,” (Luke 1:30). It was not the speech of Mary that the angel answered – for she had not spoken – but it was her thought that he answered. For he knew her thought. He commended the constancy of her soul. But he also marveled at the one who had sent him, for he knew what sort of one it was who had sent him to her, (one who) knows (i.e., God) the constancy of her soul. Therefore she is the one of whom so much is spoken. She is the one who has been redeemed among many, this one to whom Isaias pointed, “Behold, the Virgin will conceive and bear a son and he will be called Emmanuel,” (Isa. 7:14) having said this many generations before through the Holy Spirit, saying: “Behold the Virgin will conceive and bear a son” as if she is unique on the whole earth.³²

Apostrophe

Rufus makes fairly frequent use of *apostrophe*, the figure in which a speaker breaks off, or more literally “turns away,” from addressing the audience (e.g., in a play) and directs speech to an absent third party, whether dead or

³² Sheridan 1998: 198–9 (text), 231–2 (translation).

alive, or even to an impersonal object.³³ It has been described as a “pathetic step of desperation on the part of the speaker.”³⁴ It may be in the form of an exclamation or of a question. In commenting on Matt. 2:17–18, Rufus turns to Rachel (mentioned in the quotation Jer. 31:15 in Matt. 2:18) and addresses her directly:

ΔΡΟ ΤΕΡΙΜΕ Ω ΖΡΑΧΗΛ ΔΥΩ ΕΤΒΕΟΥ ΤΟΕΙΤ ΝΤΕΣΖΕ ΝΤΑΥΜΕΡΙΤΣ ΕΙΡΙΜΕ
 ΧΕΔΥΤΩΡΠΙ ΝΝΑΩΗΡΕ ΖΜΠΑΖΑΜΗΡ ΔΥΜΟΥΟΥΤ ΝΠΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΝΖΗΤ
 ΕΦΑΩΝΤΑΕΚΙΒΕ.

ΖΩ ΕΡΟ Ω ΖΡΑΧΗΛ ΤΗΤΟΝ ΕΠΟΥΖΡΟΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜΠΡΙΜΕ ΔΥΩ ΝΟΥΒΑΛ
 ΜΑΡΟΥΛΟ ΕΥΤΡΙΜΕΙΝ ΔΥΜΟΥΟΥΤ ΝΝΟΥΩΗΡΕ ΖΝΟΥΧΙΝΘΟΝ ΝΤΕΤΗΑΝΟΧΟΥ
 ΕΒΟΛ ΔΝ.

Why are you weeping, O Rachel, and why such mourning? “It is because they have seized my children from my arms and killed the fruit of my womb crying for my breast that I am weeping...”

To you also, O Rachel, I give relief to your voice from your sobbing and as for your eyes, let them cease producing tears. Your children have been killed through violence. We will not abandon them.³⁵

Later on, when commenting on the statement that John the Baptist’s clothing was made of camel hair, Rufus exclaims:

ΔΡΟΚ ΜΗΝΕΙΒΩ ΝΒΑΜΟΥΛ Ω ΪΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ ΕΡΕΤΑΖΒΩ ΠΕΧΑΔ ΖΗΝΕΙΒΩ
 ΝΒΑΜΟΥΛ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕΗΠΑΤΕΦΩΤΣΟΡΤ ΝΩΖΩΚΕ ΝΟΠΕΡΙΕΙΒ ΧΕΕΡΕΝΕΡΙΟΜΕ
 ΝΑΩΘΖ ΝΣΕΡΕΙΟΠΕ ΝΣΕΤΣΑΒΟ ΕΤΣΟΦΙΑ ΜΠΩΖΕ ΝΣΕΟΥΩΔΕ ΝΤΕΙΩΤΗΝ
 ΝΣΑΖΤ ΠΕ ΤΑΪ ΕΤΕΜΗΜΑΤΟΙ ΝΑΩΠΑΖΩ ΜΗΣΤΡΑΤΕΥΜΑ ΝΑΩΠΟΩΩ ΕΙΜΗΤΕΙ
 ΠΕΤΕΡΕΠΕΚΛΗΡΟΣ ΝΑΤΑΖΟΥ ΝΩΧΙΤΩ.

Why (are you clothed) in those camels’ hairs, O, John? “It is out of these camels’ hairs,” he said, “that my clothing is (made) because the lamb has not yet grown wool and been sheared so that the women might weave and spin and demonstrate the skill of weaving and cutting this woven garment. It is this (garment) that no soldier will be able to tear, no army will be able to divide except the one to whom the lot will fall, and he will receive it” (cf. John 19:23).³⁶

After an imaginary interlocutor interrupts and demands a clear explanation, he turns back explicitly to his audience, saying, “Listen, O hearer:

³³ Halsall 1992: 1.830–6.

³⁴ “ein pathetischer Verzweiflungsschritt des Redners” Lausberg 1990: §§762.

³⁵ Sheridan 1998: 65–6 (text), 131 (translation).

³⁶ Sheridan 1998: 81–2 (text), 138–9 (translation).

John's garment is (made) out of camel hair. The camel does not split the hoof but it does ruminate." This is the introduction to a complex allegorical explanation that ends with the programmatic statement: "The new Word, having made worship of this carnal sort, circumcision, times, festivals, the temple, and the worldly altar with its furnishings to come to naught, all these things, he reduced through the spirit to make them enter through the discernment of allegory."³⁷

Rufus also often employs a variation of *apostrophe* when he addresses his audience abstractly in the third person singular as "O Man." In the context of the temptations experienced by Christ in the desert, he exclaims:

ἸΠΕΡΕΚΟ ἸΚΩΙΝΕ ΝΣΑΟΥΩΜ Ω ΠΡΩΜΕ ἸΤΑΦΝΗΣΤΕΥΕ ΕΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
ΜΗΝΕΤΕῖΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΜΜΟΝ ΕΚΩΔΗΕΚΟ ἸΜΟΟΥ ΟΝ ΝΕΝΤΑΚΝΗΣΤΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΟΥ
ΟΝ ΝΤΕΥΝΟΥ ΦΗΑΤΠΕΦΟΥΟΪ ΕΡΟΚ ΝΩΠΕΤΠΡΑΖΕ ΝΚΩΤΗ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΤΟΟΥΤ
ΝΝΕΤΣΗΕ ἸΠΕΙΤΥΠΟΣ.

Do not hunger and seek for food, O man. It was from the world and the things in the world that he fasted. For, if you hunger again for those things from which you have also fasted, then suddenly the tempter will approach you and you will hear from him the things written of in this typical case.³⁸

He makes use of this figure also in the homilies on Luke. For example, in the context of the annunciation scene of Luke 1:26–7, he exclaims:

Ω ΠΡΩΜΕ ΣΕΣΟΒΤΕ ΕΤΒΗΝΤΚ ΝΟΥΟΙῖΝῖΣΕ ΝΘΑΥΗΑ. ΕΤΡΕΟΥΔΕΡΗΝ ΧΠΕΩΗΡΕ
ΝΤΕΟΥΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΜΠΕΣΣΟΥῖΖΟΟΥΤ ΜῖΣΕ ΔΝΑΥ ΕΝΕΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΤΟΥΒΙΑΖΕ ΜΜΟΟΥ.
ΕΤΒΕ ΧΕ ΑΚΧῖΝΘΟΝΕ ΕΤΕΦΥΣΙΣ ἸΤΕΚΜΗΤΡΩΜΕ ἸΩΡΠ Ω ΠΡΩΜΕ.

O man, a marvelous generation is being prepared for your sake, that someone barren might bear a son, and a Virgin who did not know man give birth. Look at the natural phenomena which suffer violence, because you did violence to the nature of your humanity previously, O man.³⁹

In this case the *apostrophe* is artfully repeated to form an inclusion with antitheses within the inclusion. Further along in his exposition of the annunciation scene, Rufus uses the same device:

ΑΦΧΙ ΝΟΥΣΩΜΑ ΝΡΩΜΕ. ΕΦΤΑΗΥ ΑΥΩ ΕΦΖΑΩΠΗΡΕ. ΕΑΦΤΑΜΙΟΥ ΝΑΦ
ΖΗΤΕΚΦΥΣΙΣ Ω ΠΡΩΜΕ. ΑΦΟΥΟΝΕΦ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΩΣ ΡΩΜΕ. ἸΠΕΦΝΟΥΧ ΕΒΟΛ
ἸΤΕΦΜΗΤΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΩΡΠ. ΑΦΧΙΣΩΜΑ ΣΕ ΑΦΡΡΩΜΕ ΩΑΝΤΕΦΚΤΟ

³⁷ For the exegetical background of this statement, see Sheridan 2003: 1023–33.

³⁸ Sheridan 1998: 90 (text), 144 (translation). ³⁹ Sheridan 1998: 180 (text), 224 (translation).

ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲱⲣⲙ ⲧⲉϥⲧⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲉ. ⲛϥⲙⲟϥⲣ ⲙⲡⲗⲱⲣⲉ. ⲧⲉϥⲧⲟϥⲛⲉ
ⲥⲡⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟϥⲧ.

He took a human body, precious and wonderful, having fashioned it for himself with your nature, O man. He appeared as man. He did not discard his prior divinity, but took a body and became man, that he might convert the one who had gone astray, help the one who had fallen, and bind the strong one, and raise the one who was dead.⁴⁰

At the conclusion of the scene he exclaims,

ⲁϥⲗⲱⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲓⲧⲁⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲓⲁ ⲁⲡⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϥⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲡⲉ. ⲱ ⲛⲓϥⲁⲗⲉ ⲉⲧⲟⲛⲉ
ⲉⲧⲟ ⲛϥⲟϥⲱⲡⲉ ϥⲛⲧⲟϥ. ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲱⲣⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁ ϥⲛⲧⲟϥ. ⲗⲉ
ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲛⲡⲣⲟⲕⲟⲡⲓ ⲟϥⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟϥⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ.

The ministry was finished and the angel went up to heaven. O these living words, which are worthy of being revered! These on which it is fitting for us to meditate that our progress might be evident to everyone!⁴¹

Anthypophora

Rufus also makes use of the device known in Greek as *anthypophora* or the imaginary interlocutor, where one asks one's own questions or raises and then settles imaginary objections.⁴² In commenting on the command of the angel (in a dream) to Joseph to return to the land of Israel, Rufus had introduced the verse of Ps. 75:2 "Great is his name in Israel," which he then explains allegorically in terms of the traditional etymological meaning of the name "Israel" as "he who sees God." The text is broken, but the allusion seems clear enough. Rufus is aware, however, that such allegorical interpretation may seem strange to his hearers and so he says, "Do not let someone think, beloved, that it is a strange teaching for which we are making you zealous." This allows him to insist then that it is not strange, but belongs to the authentic tradition of the Church.⁴³

Soon after this passage Rufus offers an allegorical explanation of Matt. 2: 22–3, where it is explained why Jesus was called "the Nazorean." By using the rule of explaining Scripture by means of Scripture, Rufus cites a number of other Scriptural passages where the word "Nazorean" is

⁴⁰ Sheridan 1998: 190 (text), 228 (translation). ⁴¹ Sheridan 1998: 207 (text), 235 (translation).

⁴² Bons 1992: 1.685–6.

⁴³ Sheridan 1998: 74 (text), 135 (translation), 268, 285 (interpretation).

found, including the story of Samson and Delilah in Judges 16:13–14, where seven locks (plaits) of hair are mentioned. The number seven suggests the seven gifts of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2), which Jesus kept intact. At this point Rufus seems conscious of the fact that he might be stretching the imagination of his hearers and asks, “If someone will say that it is violence that we are doing to the text by comparing the Nazorean who is revealed to the Nazorean who is concealed, let him tell me, what is the virtue if you let your hair grow?” The text is unfortunately broken but after the missing leaf the preacher is continuing to warn against the pleasures represented by Delilah. The introduction of the imaginary objection has made it possible to expand and insist on the allegorical interpretation.⁴⁴

In explaining Matt. 4:1, “then Jesus was taken to the desert by the spirit to be tempted by the devil,” Rufus first uses *apostrophe*: “O these spiritual successions!” Then he introduces an *anaphora* of contrasts between the divine power of Jesus based on Scriptural allusions or citations and the fact that he is being taken to the desert to be tempted. This is followed by another *apostrophe*: “Do not hear and be disturbed, O hearer” and he exhorts the hearers to be firm in their faith in the humanity of “your Lord.” Then he brings in an imaginary interlocutor: “Someone will say to me, ‘If then it was as man (human) that he was taken up, what then is this desert of which I am hearing?’”⁴⁵ Finally Rufus explains that the “desert” is to be interpreted as a figure referring to “a state of desolation.” But then he introduces the interlocutor again: “Someone will say to me, ‘Tell me the meaning of the expression, what desert is this to which this divine son has been taken?’”⁴⁶ This allows him to expand on the theme, to introduce another example of the “desert,” citing Jesus’ use of Ps. 21:1 on the cross and to conclude with moral exhortations.

Further along in the same homily and commenting on the temptation “let these stones become bread” (Matt. 4:3) after the fast of forty days and nights, Rufus says, “Someone will say to me, ‘What sort of temptation is this?’ Say ‘Let these stones become bread.’”⁴⁷ This gives him the opportunity to expand on the subject of spiritual food and the fact that there is harmful teaching for the soul that must be rejected. The account of the next temptation to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple is followed in turn by the introduction of the imaginary interlocutor again,

⁴⁴ Sheridan 1998: 78 (text), 137 (translation), 286 (interpretation).

⁴⁵ Sheridan 1998: 88 (text), 142–3 (translation), 290 (interpretation).

⁴⁶ Sheridan 1998: 88–9 (text), 143 (translation). ⁴⁷ Sheridan 1998: 91 (text), 145 (translation).

“Someone will say to me, ‘This temptation is different.’”⁴⁸ And this provides the opportunity for further allegorical explanation of the “city” as the “soul.” In each case the imaginary interlocutor has been introduced to allow the preacher to correct potential misunderstanding or to introduce new explanations.

Conclusion

The examples that have been offered of the various rhetorical devices employed by Rufus do not by any means exhaust his capacity. However, from the examples cited, it can be seen that Rufus uses many more rhetorical figures than are usually found in the Greek tradition for text-based homilies. His homilies are not “unadorned,” as text-based homilies theoretically should be in distinction to panegyric ones. On the contrary, they are composed with considerable artistry, making use of *chreia*, *synkrisis*, *chiasmus*, *anaphora*, *antitheton*, *apostrophe*, *ethopoeia*, *anthypophoron*, and so on. Some of the figures employed, such as *antitheton*, require careful composition as well as theological knowledge. This suggests that Rufus may have had a rhetorical training as part of his education quite apart from his knowledge of the exegetical tradition, which is extensive.⁴⁹ We actually do not know anything about when and how Rufus acquired his knowledge of traditional rhetorical tropes. We have only the literary evidence – how he actually used them. And we have evidence of other writers of the same period – which suggests a certain literary ambience, in which this kind of style was admired and practiced. The articles by Larsen and Maravela earlier in this volume, examining documentary evidence, suggest the presence of the lower levels of education in monasteries. With Rufus of Shotep, however, we have literary evidence suggesting an extensive knowledge of rhetorical tropes. The two levels of evidence, documentary and literary, correspond to different levels of education, as one might expect.

Other writers of the same period show a similar acquaintance with the traditional rhetorical forms. To these should be added perhaps some of the pseudonymous pieces such as those attributed to Evodius of Rome and Pseudo-Athanasius, which show the mastery of a similar high

⁴⁸ Sheridan 1998: 92 (text), 146 (translation).

⁴⁹ For a discussion of his knowledge of the exegetical tradition, see Sheridan 1998: 275–302.

Of course the fact that Rufus employs exegetical traditions developed much earlier does not imply that he had direct contact with authors such as Justin or Irenaeus.

style.⁵⁰ These latter pieces were of course not preached, but they were carefully composed using traditional rhetorical figures. The observation of Cribiore with which we began – “It is likely that all these writers became well-acquainted with the Patristic literature and with a rhetorical education that apparently only the Greek schools could offer” – is amply justified by an examination of the use of rhetorical figures in the works of Rufus of Shotep. They bear witness to the existence of a quite developed literary culture at the end of the sixth century in Egypt.⁵¹

⁵⁰ For an analysis of these, see Sheridan 2007: 25–48.

⁵¹ See also Papaconstantinou 2008b: 77–88, who places this literary activity in a broader context of a social revaluation of the Egyptian language in comparison with the elite status of Greek.

PART IV



Philosophy

10 | The Virtue of Being Uneducated: Attitudes towards Classical *Paideia* in Early Monasticism and Ancient Philosophy

HENRIK RYDELL JOHNSÉN

An elder said to the blessed Arsenius: “How is it that we have nothing from so much education and wisdom, while these Egyptian peasants have acquired such virtues?” Abba Arsenius said to him, “We have nothing from the world’s education but these Egyptian peasants have acquired the virtues from their own labors.”¹

Statements like this – contrasting “the world’s education” with the cultivation of virtues, and educated with uneducated monks – assigned here to one of the earliest abbots of the Egyptian desert, Arsenius, are not uncommon in the seminal but heterogeneous tradition of sayings and stories of the Desert Fathers. Such statements are also very much the reason why scholars upheld the view, and often still do, that “most of the monks” in the Egyptian desert were uneducated and illiterate.² This description of the early monks has also been taken as a distinguishing mark of the early monastic movement, and as something of “a startling contrast to the pagan philosophers.”³ According to this view, the positive and the negative role of education in ancient Classical philosophy and early monasticism, respectively, underscore the difference between the two traditions.

Considering more recent criticism of this traditional understanding of early monasticism, and the use of the monastic sources upon which this view is founded, it is evident that we cannot take statements like the saying of Abba Arsenius about illiteracy and lack of learning at face value. Rather than as a historical record, such statements must be read in their proper pedagogical and rhetorical context. What underlies this and other sayings rejecting books and learning is not necessarily a straightforward rejection of learning, but rather a pedagogical concern. As Lillian Larsen states, it is

¹ AP/GS X.7 (tr. Wortley 2012): Εἶπε τις γέρων τῷ μακαρίῳ Ἀρσενίῳ· Πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τῆς τοσαύτης παιδείσεως καὶ σοφίας οὐδὲν ἔχομεν, οὗτοι δὲ οἱ ἀγροῖκοι αἰγύπτιοι τοιαύτας ἀρετὰς κέκτηνται; Λέγει αὐτῷ ἄββα Ἀρσένιος· Ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου παιδείσεως οὐδὲν ἔχομεν, οὗτοι δὲ οἱ ἀγροῖκοι αἰγύπτιοι ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων πόνων τὰς ἀρετὰς κέκτηνται. The saying is almost identical with AP/G Arsenius 5.

² Burton-Christie 1993: 56–61, esp. 57; Burton-Christie 2001. See also, e.g., Marrou 1956: 330–3, esp. 330.

³ Burton-Christie 1993: 58.

not education as such that is the problem: “[i]t is allowing intellectual pursuits to infringe on the communal enterprise, or on fulfilling one’s ethical responsibility that is subject to critique.”⁴

I fully agree with these important recent advancements. My concern in this paper, however, is not so much to what extent the earliest monks were uneducated or not, but the rhetoric of the uneducated monk, as such, and where it might derive from: that is, more specifically, whether sayings like that attributed to Abba Arsenius can be further explained in the light of ancient philosophy.

Fairy von Lilienfeld has rightly pointed out that there are important threads of continuity between the uneducated monks in the desert tradition and the contrast between God’s foolishness and the world’s wisdom in the First Letter to the Corinthians by the Apostle Paul.⁵ However, my argument here is that the contrast between Classical education and Christianity in earlier pre-monastic Christian sources, partly originating in the New Testament, cannot fully explain the idea of the uneducated monk in early monasticism. There are several important aspects in the cluster of ideas relating to the criticism of Classical *paideia* in early monastic sources that we do not seem to find in the New Testament, nor in later pre-monastic Christian sources.

Sarah Rappe has rightly underscored that in many ways “the debate over the place of pagan letters in the intellectual life of Christians itself reiterates the central values of ancient literary culture”:⁶ thus, much of early Christian renegotiation of Classical *paideia*, its types of additions and subtractions, are actually already present in the antecedent literate culture. What I would like to do in this paper is to trace the rhetoric of the uneducated monk in a similar fashion back to this antecedent literate culture.

Several scholars have critically discussed the uneducated monk in early monastic sources.⁷ But what I will investigate is to what extent the explicit and implicit criticism of *paideia*, as it is presented in these sources, continues earlier internal criticism within the very tradition of Classical *paideia* that the earliest monks are supposed to have rejected. In this paper I will speak about the virtue of being uneducated in philosophy and in early

⁴ Larsen 2006a: 51. See also Wipszycka 1984: 291–5; Rubenson 1995: 141–3; Clark 1999: 53–66, esp. 53.

⁵ Lilienfeld 1968: 293.

⁶ Rappe 2001: 406. Rappe indicates that in some schools of philosophy the ideal was to withdraw from *paideia*, but she does not connect these traditions with the uneducated monks.

⁷ See, e.g., Garitte 1939b; Wipszycka 1984: 291–5; Rubenson 1995; 2000; Martin 1996: 660–70; Clark 1999: 53–6; Sheridan 2002; Larsen 2006a: 45–66; 2008; Urbano 2008; 2013: 205–28. See also Rubenson and Larsen in this volume.

monasticism, or about the uneducated monk and the uneducated philosopher.

Early Monasticism

As I indicated earlier, the saying cited above about Abba Arsenius goes along with other sayings or stories in the early monastic sources, such as the *Vita Antonii*, Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*, the (anonymous) *Historia Monachorum*, and the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.⁸ My concern is the ways that early monks are described in these sources as illiterate (*agrámmatos*) or as rustics untouched by learning, as avoiding books or being unable to read. It is of course important not to take these texts as though they provide a single coherent and unambiguous view on education, or as if there is only one view on education in these sources, or in monastic literature in general. As is well known, there are also quite a few positive references to books in the same sources. It is also notable that other early monastic sources from Upper Egypt, even of the same genre, give a slightly different picture on the value of education.⁹ But with these remarks in mind, I want to call attention to some important and recurring rhetorical moves or arguments in the criticism of education in the early monastic sources mentioned above.

A first typical feature in the conglomerate of ideas about education in these early monastic sources is the contrast between Classical education and the cultivation of virtues that we have already seen in Arsenius' saying. In the same way, there is not only a general priority regarding practice and the cultivation of virtues in the sources but also an underscored contrast between this practice and theoretical learning and Classical education.¹⁰ In the *Vita Antonii*, for instance, Antony is

⁸ The textual history of the collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is extremely complicated. As recent scholarship has shown, the textual tradition cannot be reduced to a few original types, as presumed earlier, but that, rather, there is a large array of various kinds of collections, not necessarily traceable to a single origin: see, e.g., Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997 and Rubenson 2013a. In the present study, the investigation is restricted to three edited collections representing three textual traditions rather than three original types: the Greek alphabetic collection (*AP/G*) edited by Jean-Baptiste Cotelier and reprinted in *PG* 65: 71–440; the Greek anonymous collection (*AP/GN*) edited by John Wortley (Wortley 2013); and the Greek systematic collection (*AP/GS*) edited by Jean-Claude Guy (Guy 1993–2005).

⁹ See Rubenson 2000: 129–33 and Larsen 2006a, 2013a.

¹⁰ *AP/G* Arsenius 6; *AP/G* Evagrius 7; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 58.3; 68.4 (ed. Bartelink 1974b). See also below the varied vocabulary describing monks as uneducated and the references in the footnotes.

often contrasted with philosophers and their use of dialectics and syllogisms.¹¹

With a partly similar emphasis on the importance of practice, there are also sayings that elaborate on the risk of, or the need to avoid, theological speculation or speculation related to particular passages in the Scriptures.¹² When a stranger visited Abba Poemen and started to speculate theologically from the Scriptures, Abba Poemen turned away. Another brother went to the Abba and asked why he did not answer, and Abba Poemen told him, “He [the stranger] is from on high and speaks heavenly things, whereas I am from below and speak earthly things. If he had spoken to me about passions of the soul, I would have answered him; if of spiritual things – I don’t know those things.”¹³

A second related idea that recurs in the early sources is the idea that education is something unnecessary or not useful for the pursuit of monastic virtues. In the depiction of Antony in the *Vita Antonii*, it is underscored several times that in the pursuit of virtues, the monk has “no need for studies,”¹⁴ or “no need . . . to go abroad”¹⁵ for the sake of education. Similarly, there are also stories that indicate that education is not necessary by stating that the monk has not received any education, but instead has been taught by God or by nature.¹⁶

Although several sayings and stories indicate that books were used, and even valued, by the early monks, the reading of books is also often contrasted with the cultivation of virtues, or even with the virtuous practice that is presented in the books, in ways similar to the contrast between virtues and education. For virtue, books are of minor importance at the very best. This criticism of books or statements concerning their limited value is even more common in the sources than explicit negative statements concerning education:

A brother asked Abba Serapion: “Utter a saying for me.” The elder said: “What am I going to say to you? That you took the goods of widows and

¹¹ Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 74.1 (ed. Bartelink 1994); Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 77.5; 78.2–3; 80.1–2.

¹² See Burton-Christie 1993: 154–7.

¹³ AP/GS 10.54 (tr. Wortley 2012) = AP/G Poemen 8. See also AP/G Arsenius 42; AP/G Antony 17; AP/G Amoun of Nitria 2; AP/G Pambo 9.

¹⁴ Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 73.5 (ed. Bartelink 1994; my tr.): οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα τὰ γράμματα.

¹⁵ Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 20.4 (tr. Gregg 1980): οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχομεν οὔτε ἀποδημίας. See also AP/G Arsenius 6; AP/G Evagrius 7; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 58.3; Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 1.12.1–2.

¹⁶ *Hist. mon.* 2 (Abba Or) (ed. Festugière 1971); Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 4 (Didymus the Blind). See also Cassian, *Conl.* 15.21.1 (ed. Petschenig 2004).

orphans and set them in this embrasure?” – for he saw that it was full of books.¹⁷

In another saying, the lack of hospitality of a certain monk is contrasted with his cupboard full of books.¹⁸ Another way is to contrast the use of books with the importance of memorization. For Abba Antony in the *Vita Antonii*, it was important to keep what he heard from the Scriptures in his mind in such a way that “the memory took the place of books.”¹⁹

An essential question related to these features is of course what is implied by the references to education that is said to be unwanted or rejected. In other words, in what sense are the monks *presented* as uneducated? Not surprisingly the sources point in different directions. In some sources it is clear that the monks are described as *literally* illiterate: that is, as being unable to read, like Paphnutius in the *Historia Lausiaca*.²⁰ In other cases the terminology is not that clear, as in the reference to “the world’s education” in the saying of Abba Arsenius referred to above. Arsenius and his peers are said to have a secular education that other monks are lacking, but what this secular education consists of is not explicit.

There is also a rich vocabulary in the sources describing the monks either as “simpleminded” (ἰδιώτης/*idiotā*),²¹ “illiterate” (ἀγράμματος/*illiteratus*),²² “rustic” (ἄγροικος/*rudis*),²³ “simple” (ἀφελής),²⁴ or as “having not learned letters” (γράμματα μὴ μαθών or similar),²⁵ but it is evident that we cannot always understand such terminology as simply denoting illiteracy in a modern sense. As Kendra Eshleman has shown, some terms like ἰδιώτης/*idiotā* had a long history of being used rhetorically, to “position *pepaideu-menoi* as a breed apart” in contrast to the “simpleminded” (ἰδιῶται).

¹⁷ AP/GS 6.16. Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησε τὸν ἀββᾶ Σεραπίωνα λέγων· Εἰπέ μοι ἓνα λόγον· Λέγει ὁ γέρων· Τί σοι ἔχω εἰπεῖν; ὅτι ἔλαβες τὰ τῶν χηρῶν καὶ ὀρφανῶν καὶ ἔθηκας αὐτὰ εἰς τὴν θυρίδα ταύτην. Εἶδε γὰρ αὐτὴν μεστὴν βιβλίων.

¹⁸ AP/GN 385. See also AP/GN 392 (= Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 52 (Maraval and Périchon 2004–2007)); AP/G Arsenius 42; AP/G Bessarion 12; AP/G Euprepus 7; AP/G Theodore of Pherme 1; AP/G Sisoës 17; AP/GS 6.16; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 68.4.

¹⁹ Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 3.7 (tr. Gregg 1980): τὴν μνήμην ἀντὶ βιβλίων γίνεσθαι. See also AP/GN 228.

²⁰ Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 47.3. See also *Hist. mon.* 2 (Abba Or); Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.22 (Abba Pambo).

²¹ *Vit. Ant.* 73.3; 85.5; AP/G Pistou 1 = AP/GS 15.60; AP/G Daniel 7: ἰδιωτεῖαν; AP/GN 216 = AP/GS 10.112. See also Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 6.7.21.

²² *Hist. mon.* 2 (Abba Or). See also Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 4.23; 6.7.21.

²³ AP/G Apollo 2; AP/G Arsenius 5; AP/G Arsenius 6; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 22.1.

²⁴ AP/G Daniel 7: ἀφελής. ²⁵ Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 1.2; 72.1; 78.1; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 4.1.

The latter could include the uneducated masses but just as well educated non-specialists. The term ἰδιώτης could also be used, as Eshleman puts it, as “an outside vantage point from which to criticize the conduct of insiders and the value of their expertise.”²⁶

In other cases, as in the *Vita Antonii*, it is clear that “illiterate” or “not having learned letters” must be referring to a lack of some higher form of education rather than a basic ability to read and write.²⁷

A passage from the fifth-century church historian Sozomen points in a similar direction. In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, Sozomen says, not that the monks of Egypt are illiterate but that:

...[t]hey neglect many branches of mathematics and the technicalities of dialectics because they regard such studies as useless, and as taking time which can be dedicated to better things, seeing that they contribute nothing towards a correct living. They apply themselves exclusively to the cultivation of natural and useful wisdom, in order that they may eradicate completely, or mitigate evil.²⁸

What the monks reject, according to Sozomen, is thus not education in general, but subjects that were often described as part of the “liberal arts.”²⁹ The set of subjects that eventually became the *artes liberales* of the Middle Ages, i.e., mathematics and dialectics (mentioned by Sozomen), and grammar, rhetoric, astronomy, and music, had roots traceable back to Plato and the Classical period. But the terminology as well as the subjects included under this rubric varied, and its final form was not in place until Late Antiquity.³⁰ Normally, however, the liberal arts belonged to secondary-level education, that followed elementary instruction in reading and writing. Thus, elementary education was usually not included. The same holds true for philosophy. In the Academy, and the Peripatetic and Stoic schools, the liberal arts were rather the usual *preparation* for philosophy (even if not

²⁶ Eshleman 2012: 67–77.

²⁷ See Garitte 1939b; Rubenson 1990: 141–3; Criboire 2013: 66–8; cf. Seneca, *Ben.* 5.13.3: “we call a man ‘illiterate’, [*illiteratus*] though he may be not utterly untutored [*rudem*] but only not acquainted with the higher branches of learning [*altiores litteras*]” (tr. Basore 1928–1935). See also Martin 1996: 663–70 on the distinction between knowing Greek and knowing Coptic. For various definitions of *grammata*, see Kaster 1988: 35–44.

²⁸ μαθημάτων μὲν πολλῶν καὶ διαλεκτικῆς τεχνολογίας . . . περιέργου . . . Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 1.12.1–2 (ed. Bidez and Hansen 1960; tr. Walford 1885 with my changes). See also Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 58.3, where Diocles gives up his liberal education in order to become a monk.

²⁹ See Westergren in this volume.

³⁰ For the liberal arts, see Hadot 2005. For a partly different view of the development, see Christes 1997a: 62–4.

of equal importance as philosophy itself).³¹ There were also schools that found such preparation unnecessary just like the early monks described by Sozomen. As we will see, Sozomen's description conforms very much to views that were common among Epicureans and Cynics concerning education.

Before turning to ancient philosophy and the criticism of Classical *paideia*, I need to say a few words about pre-monastic Christian sources and education, and to what extent the attitudes towards *paideia* in early monastic sources are congruent with rejections of Classical culture in Christian pre-monastic sources.

As is well known, the way in which pre-monastic and later Christian authors understood Christianity in relation to pagan culture and Classical education varied.³² We have writers such as Tertullian or Tatian who were clearly hostile towards Greek *paideia*, at least rhetorically.³³ But there were others, such as Clement of Alexandria or Origen, who affirmed the value of pagan literate culture and education but still condemned immoral or incompatible aspects of that same culture to various degrees. Later, Basil of Caesarea's *Ad adulescentes* expresses this "normal" position.³⁴

To some extent the hostile attitudes, like those of Tertullian or Tatian, had their origin in the New Testament. Such attitudes relate to how the apostle Paul treated the question about the wisdom of the world and the Christian faith (especially in his First Letter to the Corinthians),³⁵ and also to the fact that the apostles were simple fishermen and presented as "uneducated" (ἀγράμματοι) and "ordinary" (ἰδιῶται) in Acts 4:13, or even to the way Jesus was depicted as wise and learned despite having "never been taught" in John 7:15.³⁶

But is this hostile attitude in these pre-monastic sources the same as the negative views towards *paideia* in later, early monastic sources? There are indeed certain similarities, like the distinction between faith and worldly wisdom, or the connection between illiteracy and divine "inspired

³¹ For the liberal arts as preparation for philosophy, see Hadot 2005: 270–80. See also Christes 1997b.

³² See Laistner 1951; Marrou 1956: 319–23; Jaeger 1961; Rappe 2001.

³³ For Tertullian's dependency on Classical rhetoric and Classical culture despite his rejection, see Steiner 1989. For Tatian, see Elze 1960: 19–33.

³⁴ See, e.g., *Ad adulescentes* 2.5–8 and 4.1–10 (ed. Boulenger 1935).

³⁵ See 1 Cor. 1.18–25; 1 Cor. 3.18–20.

³⁶ ἔθαύμαζον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες, Πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς; see Zanetti 2004. For literacy in early Christianity, see Gamble 1995: 1–41; Harris 1989: 298–322; Lane Fox 1994.

wisdom,” seen for instance in the *Vita Antonii*.³⁷ I do not deny these, but there are also other essential aspects, which I have discussed so far in this paper, that are not to be found in these earlier Christian writers. And while the basic problem with Greek *paideia* for Tertullian or Tatian concerns primarily unacceptable doctrines within the philosophical tradition, or two incompatible conceptions, faith and reason or Christian faith and Classical culture,³⁸ the essential problem in the early monastic sources is something different. As we have seen, the crucial problem is not so much about incompatible worldviews (the contrast between faith and worldly wisdom in the *Vita Antonii*, just mentioned, is an exception), but about *priorities*, or the need to avoid all that is unnecessary and that does not contribute to progress in virtue. This is an important difference. My argument is that the origin of *these* aspects needs to be sought elsewhere, in certain traditions of Greco-Roman philosophy.

It is clear, although it was very much a “privilege of a small minority,”³⁹ that philosophy was often, even if not always, understood as the highest stage of Greco-Roman education (so, e.g., in Philo, Seneca, and Plutarch).⁴⁰ Despite this close connection between *paideia* and philosophy, there were several schools of philosophy in Antiquity that to varying degrees rejected *paideia*, or understood it as something unnecessary or even useless when true philosophy was concerned. This idea was most prominent and important in Epicureanism and Cynicism, as mentioned above. There were also other critics of *paideia*, or certain forms of *paideia*, that have less in common with the monastic sources, like the Stoic Seneca, who was critical of the liberal arts but who nonetheless asserted their value as a preparation for philosophy,⁴¹ or Pyrrhonian skeptics, who rejected the liberal arts on epistemological grounds,⁴² quite different from the monastic sources. These will be left aside here.

I will now turn to Epicureanism and Cynicism, and their different understanding of education and its position in relation to philosophy. As we will see they have many features in common, and we know that

³⁷ For faith and worldly wisdom, see Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 74.1–2; 78.1–3; 80.1–7. For illiteracy and inspired wisdom, see Ath. *Vit. Ant.* 78.1; 80.4. See also Bartelink 2003 for this theme in pre-monastic sources.

³⁸ Steiner 1989; Karadimas 2003: 25–30. Karadimas also indicates other arguments against philosophy in Tatian such as the doctrinal disagreement between various schools, the inconsistency between words and deeds among philosophers, or the distance between philosophy and the lives of ordinary people.

³⁹ Morgan 1998: 43. ⁴⁰ Morgan 1998: 193, 195, 265.

⁴¹ See Seneca, *Ep.* 88. For Seneca’s criticism and Basil’s *Ad adulescentes*, see Rappe 2001: 410–11.

⁴² See Blank 1998.

Epicurus might have had some knowledge of Diogenes of Sinope (the founder of Cynicism). Alternately, perhaps such common features reflect a common origin in a Socratic tradition, a tradition of importance for both schools.

Epicureanism

Even though many of Epicurus' works are lost, we can get some idea of his view on education from his extant writings, from sayings circulating and being associated with him, and from a number of ancient commentators on his philosophy;⁴³ although one needs to be careful when interpreting the latter since many are polemical against Epicurus and his school.⁴⁴

It is clear, however, that Epicurus understood philosophy ultimately in practical and medical terms, as a way to secure "the health of the soul."⁴⁵ One could point out that the first four sayings in the famous Epicurean collection of *Kyriai doxai* were actually called *tetrapharmakos* (the fourfold cure). It is true that physics and epistemology were also of importance for Epicurean philosophy. However, neither was an end in itself. Both were basically subordinated to and supposed to support the very same therapy of the soul.⁴⁶

This great emphasis on therapy and ethics seems also to have determined Epicurus' view on education, a view that was well known in Late Antiquity. Unlike other critics of Classical education such as Seneca, who despite his criticism of the liberal arts could still affirm their value as a preparation for philosophy, Epicurus proposed a complete "alternative education, which should replace all other types of education."⁴⁷ Accordingly, in one *apophthegma* or saying quoted from Epicurus' letter to Pythocles, Epicurus encourages his reader to "flee" from "all *paideia*."⁴⁸ Another saying in a similar vein is quoted in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*: "I congratulate you, O Apelles, because you

⁴³ For Epicureanism and Classical *paideia*, see, e.g., Salem 2009: 21–7; Blank 1998: xxx–xxxii and 2009: 216–33; Asmis 2001.

⁴⁴ See Blank 1998: 71.

⁴⁵ *Ep. ad Menoec.* 122: τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον (ed. Arrighetti 1973). See also, e.g., Porph. *Marc.* 31 (= Usener 1887: no. 221; ed. Pötscher 1969).

⁴⁶ See Salem 2009: 25–7; Asmis 1999. Epicurean philosophy had three parts: epistemology (or canonic), physics, and ethics: see, e.g., Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 10.29–30.

⁴⁷ Asmis 2004: 211: "une éducation alternative qui devait remplacer tous les autres types d'éducation" (my translation.); see also Asmis 2001: 214–15. For Epicurean education, see Asmis 2001; Asmis 2004.

⁴⁸ Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 10.6 (ed. Dorandi 2013): παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεύγε.

have embarked on philosophy pure of all *paideia*.⁴⁹ According to other sources such as Cicero, Diogenes Laertius, and Sextus Empiricus, Epicurus even claimed to have been self-taught,⁵⁰ a claim that seems akin to what can be seen in some monastic sources: that certain monks were taught only by God or by nature.

It is of course difficult to know exactly what is implied by *paideia* in the two Epicurean sayings just quoted. There might quite possibly be a rhetorical twist to them as well, but the rejection of *paideia* seems to be confirmed by other ancient sources in a specific sense. Epicurus seems not to have rejected the basic teaching and learning of letters,⁵¹ but more specifically, the liberal arts. This is at least how a number of ancient commentators, such as Cicero, Plutarch, Athenaeus of Naucratis, and Sextus Empiricus – some of them more polemical than the others – present it.⁵² According to the Epicurean Torquatus in Cicero's *De finibus*, Epicurus was not uneducated. The problem was the liberal arts:

Should he, like Plato, have wasted his days studying music, geometry, arithmetic and astronomy? Those subjects start from false premises and so cannot be true. And even if they were true, they have no bearing [*nihil adferrent*] on whether we live more pleasantly – that is, better. Should he really have pursued those arts, and neglected the greatest and most difficult, and thereby the most fruitful art of all, the art of life? It is not Epicurus who is uneducated [*ineruditus*], but those who think that topics fit for a child to have learned should be studied until old age.⁵³

This criticism of the liberal arts seems to be confirmed by Epicurean sources, as well. We know of quite a few works negative to the liberal arts by Epicurus and by his followers,⁵⁴ even though the rejection of the liberal arts does not seem to have always been as radical as the above-mentioned authors presented it. Philodemus, for instance, could grant certain liberal arts (*technai*) some value. As David L. Blank states

⁴⁹ Ath. *Deipn.* 13.53 (Usener 1887: 117); ed. Kaibel (1965–1966): καθαρὸς πάσης παιδείας ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν ὥρμησαι. See also Quint. *Inst.* 2.2.24 (Usener 1887: 163; ed. Russell 2001).

⁵⁰ Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.26.72–3 (ed. Plasberg 1917); Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 10.13 (Diogenes refers to Epicurus' letter to Eurylochus); Sext. Emp. *Math.* Pr.3 (ed. Mau 1961).

⁵¹ See Sext. Emp. *Math.* 1.49 (Usener 1887: 22).

⁵² See Plut. *Contr. Epicur. Beat.* 11 (1093cd) (ed. Westman 1959); Ath., *Deipn.* 13.53; Sext. Emp. *Math.* Pr.1.

⁵³ *Fin.* 1.21.72 (ed. Reynolds 1998; tr. Woolf, in Annas 2001). See also *Fin.* 2.4.12; *Acad.* 2.30.97 (ed. Plasberg 1922).

⁵⁴ Blank 1998: xxx–xxxi.

with reference to Philodemus, “certain things with which *technai* are concerned are worth having or knowing, even for the philosopher.”⁵⁵

What seems to have been behind Epicurus’ rejection of *paideia* was his focus on ethics and happiness and the practice of virtues, or the therapeutic aim of his philosophy,⁵⁶ and the idea that everything that does not contribute to ethics and moral therapy is not necessary or a waste of time. According to Sextus Empiricus, “the Epicureans claimed that the liberal studies contributed nothing towards the attainment of wisdom.”⁵⁷ And Cicero’s Torquatus also states, “[Epicurus] thought all education [*eruditionem*] worthless which did not foster our learning to live happily.”⁵⁸ Thus, for Epicurus, all other branches of philosophy were useless if they did not contribute to this practical goal.⁵⁹ And as Jean Salem states, there was no reason for Epicurus to postpone his goal – achieving happiness – by spending time on studying the liberal arts.⁶⁰

In sum: we seem to find many of the same ideas and approaches to education in Epicurean sources and in descriptions of Epicurean philosophy as we see in our early monastic texts: an emphasis on virtues and practice in contrast to education; the idea that certain forms of education are useless for philosophy; and that liberal arts studies, especially, are something unnecessary for philosophy. However, one significant difference is the role of physics and epistemology in Epicureanism;⁶¹ another, the apparent use of books in Epicurean therapy:⁶² features very much in contrast to what we see in the monastic sources under consideration. But besides this, there are several notable parallels in the attitudes towards *paideia*.

Even though the Epicurean school was falling into decline in the third and fourth centuries CE, we know that Epicurean ideas and practices were taken up by other schools,⁶³ and thus that Epicureanism in a certain sense continued to have an impact on philosophy. However, concerning *paideia* the Epicurean position also had much in common with another school, the Cynics, a movement that was prospering in the Roman Empire and that still played a prominent role in society, in the very centuries of the

⁵⁵ Blank 1998: xxxi. ⁵⁶ For philosophy as therapy, see Salem 2009: 9–21.

⁵⁷ . . . τῶν μαθημάτων . . . μηδὲν συνεργούντων. . . *Math. Pr. 1* (tr. Blank 1998 with my changes). See also *Math. Pr. 5*.

⁵⁸ *Fin. 1.21.71*. See also *Fin. 2.4.12*. ⁵⁹ See Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil. 10.8*.

⁶⁰ Salem 2009: 23. See Cic. *Fin. 1.21.72*. ⁶¹ See Salem 2009: 25–7; Asmis 1999.

⁶² Tsouna 2009: 254. ⁶³ See Erler 2009: 46–64.

emergence of early monasticism.⁶⁴ I will now turn to the Cynics. As we will see, the correspondence with our monastic sources is even greater when it comes to Cynicism.

Cynicism

When reconstructing Cynic philosophy, one has to rely on sayings attributed to Cynics, not the least to their founder, Diogenes of Sinope, the pseudepigraphical *Cynic epistles*, and various renderings of Cynic philosophy in other writers.⁶⁵ In spite of the limited amount of sources there is still quite a lot of scholarly consensus regarding their philosophy and their understanding of *paideia*.⁶⁶

Cynicism was quite different from many other schools of philosophy, even from Epicureanism. There was no real Cynic institution like the Academy of the Platonists or the garden of Epicurus. Accordingly, many outsiders even hesitated in calling Cynicism a school (*hairesis*) of philosophy.⁶⁷ But just like Epicureanism, Cynic philosophy was very much about ethics. In fact, the focus on ethical practice was even more dominant than in Epicureanism; there seem to have been no real “doctrines” (δόγματα) in Cynic philosophy.⁶⁸ Cynicism was thus rather a way of life than a dogmatic position. Accordingly, it was also adopted and interpreted in somewhat different ways by philosophers belonging to other schools; some, like Epictetus, favored a Cynicism purged from its more scandalous elements,⁶⁹ others, a Cynicism without the traditional rejection of *paideia*.⁷⁰ There also seem to have been milder versions of the movement itself, where the shocking elements were dropped.⁷¹ Bearing

⁶⁴ See Augustine, *Contr. acad.* 3.19.42 (ed. Green 1970); Julian, *Or.* 6 and 7 (ed. Rochefort 1963). See also Goulet-Cazé 1990: 2818.

⁶⁵ For the sources on ancient Cynicism, see Desmond 2008: 5–6, and Billerbeck 1996.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Goulet-Cazé 2010: 100–13; Goulet-Cazé 1986: 152–4; Desmond 2008: 127–9; Overwien 2005: 316–21; Malherbe 1982: 50–2; Branham and Goulet-Cazé 1996: 23; Dudley 1937: 99.

⁶⁷ Goulet-Cazé 1993: 273–313. ⁶⁸ Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 1.120 and Goulet-Cazé 2010: 100–1.

⁶⁹ Billerbeck 1996: esp. 207–8.

⁷⁰ See e.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.29–30 (ed. Arnim 1893–1896), and Julian, *Or.* 6. For Dio and Julian and Cynicism, see Billerbeck 1996: 211–13, 216–20.

⁷¹ Malherbe 1982: 50–2, and Goulet-Cazé 1986: 26. Some sayings attributed to Diogenes of Sinope stress the importance of *paideia* (see, e.g., Stob. *Flor.* 2.31.75 (Giannantoni 1990: no. 377); Papyrus Michigan Inv. 41.1.6–7 (Giannantoni 1990: 387)). But Goulet-Cazé’s argument that these sayings refer to moral education and ascetic training, and not *paideia* in the ordinary sense, seems plausible, see Goulet-Cazé 1986: 152–4.

this diversity in mind, I will concentrate on the more austere and traditional version of Cynicism in the following.

Associated with the Cynics, at least in later sources, is the idea of Cynicism as a “shortcut to virtue.”⁷² This notion was, as it seems, adopted by Cynics as a criticism of the intellectualization of philosophy in contrast to the important cultivation of virtues,⁷³ and meant that the Cynics, just like the Epicureans, rejected the liberal arts as a precondition for studying and practicing philosophy.⁷⁴ Diogenes Laertius (third century CE) gives the following description of the Cynics: “They are content then, like Ariston of Chios, to do away with the subjects of Logic and Physics and to devote their whole attention to Ethics.”⁷⁵ And then Diogenes continues:

They also dispense with the ordinary subjects of instruction. At least Antisthenes used to say that those who had attained discretion had better not learn letters, lest they should be perverted by alien influences. So they also get rid of geometry and music and all such studies.⁷⁶

We find statements in a similar vein among the various sayings attributed to Diogenes as well.⁷⁷ The reason for rejecting *paideia*, in this sense, seems to have been very much the same as for the Epicureans, and as we have seen in the early monastic sources. Diogenes Laertius indicates that Diogenes of Sinope, the founder of Cynicism, neglected “[m]usic and geometry, and astronomy, and all things of that kind,” because they were “useless and unnecessary.”⁷⁸ Accordingly, the liberal arts were very much understood as a distraction from the proper goal of philosophy: that is, from ethics and the practical cultivation of virtues.⁷⁹

⁷² Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.104: σύντομον ἐπ’ ἀρετὴν ὁδόν. See also Ps.-Diog. *Ep.* 30 (ed. Herscher 1873); Ps.-Crates Theb. *Ep.* 6 (ed. Herscher 1873).

⁷³ See Emeljanov 1965: 184.

⁷⁴ See Goulet-Cazé 1986: 22–7. The Cynics were also criticized for this shortcut: see, e.g., Lucian, *Vit. auct.* 11 (ed. Harmon 1915); *Jul. Or.* 7.225; 7.235.

⁷⁵ Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.103 (tr. Hicks 1925).

⁷⁶ τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα . . . γράμματα γοῦν μὴ μανθάνειν. . . . Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.103–4 (tr. Hicks 1925 with my changes). See also Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.27–8 (= Giannantoni 1990: 374); 6.39 (= Giannantoni 1990: 371). See also Gal. *De peccat. dign.* 3.12–13 (ed. De Boer 1937: 48–9); Nesselrath 1998: 134; and Funk 1907: 600, on partly similar Cynic tendencies in Lucian of Samosata and his presentation of Cynicism.

⁷⁷ Stob. *Flor.* 2.1.23 (Giannantoni 1990: 372); 3.31.118 (Giannantoni 1990: 373); 3.33.14 (Giannantoni 1990: 363).

⁷⁸ ἀχρήστων καὶ οὐκ ἀναγκαίων. Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6. 73. See also Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.24; 6.103.

⁷⁹ See Branham and Goulet-Cazé 1996: 22; “from ethics,” Desmond 2008: 127.

It is also notable that among the Cynics, just like in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and similar early monastic sources, we even find criticism of books and the use of books.⁸⁰ Just like the liberal arts, books, too, could be presented as a matter of focusing in the wrong direction: i.e., in comparison with the cultivation of virtues. In one saying, very much in the same vein as the short saying about Abba Serapion mentioned above, a certain Hegesias asks Diogenes of Sinope to lend him one of his books, and Diogenes replies:

You're an idiot, Hegesias; you'd choose real figs, rather than painted ones; and yet you'd overlook real training [for virtue] to rush headlong for what is written.⁸¹

Just as in the saying of Abba Serapion, the urgency and the importance of cultivating virtues and improving one's behavior and inner self is contrasted in these Cynic sayings with books and the reading of books. And just as in the monastic sayings, books could be contrasted with the importance of memorization: "When a friend complained to him [i.e., to Antisthenes] that he had lost his notes, he said: 'You should have inscribed them on your mind instead of on paper.'"⁸²

It needs to be mentioned however that, despite this criticism of books, there is a certain ambiguity in the sources. We have extant Cynic epistles, and even if it is difficult to verify, at least in regard to Diogenes, there are also writings ascribed to Diogenes and Antisthenes.⁸³ An ambiguity towards books can be observed for the monastic sources too. Samuel Rubenson, for example, has also argued convincingly that the letters of Antony are authentic, despite the stated illiteracy of Antony and other monks,⁸⁴ and the criticism of books in the early monastic sources.

However, even if much of the criticism of *paideia* among Epicureans and Cynics deviated from other, more dominant schools, the negative view of books was not something exclusive to Cynics; it was also common even in the broader context of ancient philosophy. The rejection or criticism of books must therefore also be related to a quite common emphasis on *oral*

⁸⁰ See Goulet-Cazé 2010: 110–12; Overwien 2005: 321–2.

⁸¹ τὴν γεγραμμένην. Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.48 (tr. Hard 2012, with my changes). See also Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.103; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.30; Julian, *Or.* 6.8; 6.20, and the less absolute criticism in *Codex Neapolitanus* 2 D 22, 49 (ed. Giannantoni 1990: 378).

⁸² Diog. Laert. *Vit. phil.* 6.5 (tr. Hicks 1925 revised by me).

⁸³ For this ambiguity, see Branham 1996: 83–6; Goulet-Cazé 1986: 26, n. 32.

⁸⁴ Rubenson 1995.

transmission of knowledge in many traditions of philosophy, and on the importance of a real teacher–student relationship for appropriate learning, in contrast to merely learning through books.⁸⁵ Books were used for teaching, and in different ways in different philosophical traditions, but at the same time they were on occasion regarded with a certain suspicion, at least pedagogically. Books were precious objects, a fact that might turn an owner away from the actual content of the book;⁸⁶ reading books was also in a sense deficient, since it did not involve any dialogue so essential to spiritual guidance.⁸⁷ As Plato states in the *Phaedrus*:⁸⁸

You'd think they [i.e., written words] were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever.

Having a book at hand could also undermine the importance of memorization in order to acquire knowledge, since one might think that always having the book at hand eliminated the need for memorization.⁸⁹ Accordingly, we need not trace the rejection of books and the rejection of *paideia* exclusively to early monastic sources in a trajectory from Cynicism: certain aspects do rather belong to a broader tradition in ancient philosophy concerning the value and importance of oral transmission of knowledge.

Is it then, finally, reasonable to think of the early monastic sources discussed in this paper as being dependent upon especially the Cynic tradition? The impact of Cynicism on early monasticism is still an open question, but there are indeed indications in the sources that could support a dependency on Cynic ideals. We know that several early Christian writers of the period looked upon Diogenes of Sinope, the ideal Cynic, as admirable and worthy of imitation in many respects, even for Christians.⁹⁰ Several scholars have also underscored the many common features of the two traditions, not the least concerning ascetic practices in relation to clothing, diet, care of the body, voluntary suffering, etc.⁹¹ Others have observed striking parallels between specific monastic portraits, like the story about Serapion in Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* and Cynic ideals.⁹²

⁸⁵ See Erler 2000; Hadot 1995: 61–4; Cambron-Goulet 2012. ⁸⁶ Cambron-Goulet 2012: 204.

⁸⁷ Cambron-Goulet 2012: 203–4, 208–9. ⁸⁸ *Phaed* 274e–275b (ed. Burnet 1901).

⁸⁹ Cambron-Goulet 2012: 206–8. ⁹⁰ See Krueger 1993.

⁹¹ See Dorival 1993; Bremmer 1992.

⁹² Reitzenstein 1906: 64–74. See also Krueger 1996 and the parallels between Symeon the Holy Fool and Diogenes of Sinope; Emperor Julian, *Or.* 7, who underscores similarities between contemporary wandering Cynics and wandering monks. For wandering monks, see Caner 2002.

Of even greater importance, however, is one of the Greco-Roman sources that the *Vita Antonii* seems to have been modeled on. The *Vita Antonii*, which had a great impact on much of the later monastic literature, is clearly dependent on Biblical sources.⁹³ And the portrayal of Antony as uneducated echoes in part how Christ is portrayed in the gospels (especially John 7:15).⁹⁴ But at the same time it is also evident that the *Vita* is recycling Greco-Roman sources.⁹⁵ Early on, Richard Reitzenstein pointed out parallels between the *Vita Antonii* and Porphyry's *Vita pythagorae*.⁹⁶ And recently Oliver Overwien has also detected parallels between the *Vita Antonii* and Lucian of Samosata's biography of the Cynic philosopher *Demonax*, both in terms of motifs and actual wording.⁹⁷ In contrast to several other works by Lucian, *Demonax* is not a portrait with ironic undertones but, just like the *Vita Antonii*, a biography that offers an admirable ideal to be imitated.⁹⁸ For our argument here, however, it is not just noteworthy that the author of the *Vita Antonii* seems to have used a biography of a Cynic-like philosopher,⁹⁹ but also that there are several similarities in how *Demonax* and Antony are depicted in relation to education and philosophy.¹⁰⁰ Just as in the *Vita Antonii*, there is a clear emphasis in *Demonax* on the practice of virtues in contrast to philosophers enmeshed in philosophical subtleties, dialectics, and speculation.¹⁰¹ There is also in both texts a similar debate about authority and a similar effort "to establish the authority of a marginal figure," and "to pit him against the established authorities";¹⁰² while in *Demonax* such authorities are sophists, philosophers, and official representatives, in the *Vita Antonii*, they are Greek philosophers. Likewise, just as in the *Vita Antonii*, higher forms of education are also presented as unimportant for *Demonax*'s way of life. *Demonax* has left aside such studies: "What qualifications had you, *Demonax*, to leave *paideia* for philosophy [ἐκ παιδείας εἰς

⁹³ See Bartelink 1982: 52–3. ⁹⁴ Zanetti 2004.

⁹⁵ For the different positions on this issue, see Bartelink 1982; Gemeinhardt 2012: 84–8. For Athanasius' education, see Gemeinhardt 2011: 79–82. For Athanasius as the author of the *Vita Antonii*, see Rubenson 2011b with further references.

⁹⁶ Reitzenstein 1914: 3–39. These parallels have been further discussed and elaborated in Rubenson 2006. For Pythagorean traditions in early Christianity, see Pevarello in this volume.

⁹⁷ Overwien 2008. Some of the parallels discussed by Overwien were noted already by Reitzenstein, see Reitzenstein 1914: 6–8.

⁹⁸ *Demonax* 2: ζῆλοῦν (ed. Harmon); *Vita Antonii* prol. 2: ζῆλῳσαι.

⁹⁹ On *Demonax* as a Cynic philosopher, see, e.g., Goulet-Cazé 1994: 718; Nesselrath 1998: 131–2.

¹⁰⁰ These parallels are not observed by Oliver Overwien, see Overwien 2008: 182.

¹⁰¹ See *Demonax* 12, 14, 21, 29, 43, 48, 56, and Clay 1992: 3412; Funk 1907: 600.

¹⁰² See Branham 1989: 57–63, esp. 60, on *Demonax*. For a similar perspective in the *Vita Antonii*, see Urbano 2013: 205–28.

φιλοσοφίαν ἤκεις]?”), a well-educated sophist, Favorinus, asks Demonax in one passage.¹⁰³

Given that the author of the *Vita Antonii* has reused parts of Lucian's *Demonax*, it is not unlikely that the portrayal of Antony as uneducated is also affected by how Lucian portrays Demonax in relation to philosophy and education. These parallels, of course, do not exclude the possibility of other sources as well for the rhetoric of the uneducated monk. However, at the same time, the parallels, together with the fact that the author of the *Vita Antonii* seems to have used a biography of a Cynic-like philosopher, do not diminish the impression that we should understand the rhetoric of the uneducated monk, as discussed in this paper, not just in continuity from and with a Biblical heritage but also within a broader educated culture, and not least the Cynic tradition.

Conclusion

To conclude, what I have argued in this paper is that we cannot isolate the early monastic ideal of being uneducated from its broader cultural context, nor regard the ideal as *merely* an independent development from within the earlier Christian tradition. Even if there is continuation with the pre-monastic criticism of Classical culture, it is evident that there are also new prominent arguments relating to this rhetorical rejection of *paideia* in the early monastic sources – the emphasis on the practice of virtues in contrast to education, the idea of certain forms of education as useless for real progress in virtue, the hesitation regarding books for this process, and the idea of the liberal arts as unnecessary or useless – that are all present already especially in the Cynic tradition. Lucian's *Demonax*, a likely model for parts of the *Vita Antonii*, might also have been one – but not necessarily the only one – of the sources from which Cynic ideals were brought into the early monastic tradition. It is thus clear that the virtue of being uneducated, promoted in the early monastic sources, is not something exclusively or typically monastic, as has often been claimed. On the contrary, this rhetoric is very much contained in and follows not least the Cynic tradition and Cynic ideals, and thus, ironically, the Classical culture that the early monastic sources claimed to reject.

¹⁰³ *Demonax* 12. See also *Demonax* 22, 29, 31, and Funk 1907: 600.

11 | Plato Between School and Cell: Biography and Competition in the Fifth-Century Philosophical Field

ARTHUR URBANO

Philosophical biography was born out of the philosophical developments and inter-scholastic rivalries of Classical and Hellenistic Greece.¹ An important tool for identity formation and competition among intellectuals, biography developed and disseminated the distinctive teachings of schools, delineated their histories and lineages, and demarcated interrelationships with rival schools. The subject of a biography functioned as a “vehicle for ideas,”² which, directly or indirectly, contended with other biographical portraits and revealed divergent philosophical trends.³ The proliferation of biographies in Late Antiquity suggests that a similar competitive atmosphere gripped the philosophical field at that time. The late Platonists Porphyry and Iamblichus used earlier Peripatetic biographies of Pythagoras as sources for their contrasting views on the origins of philosophy.⁴ The subjects of Christian biographies could resemble those of Greek and Roman lives, like Origen the scholar or Constantine the emperor. However, the spread of monasticism in the fourth and fifth centuries introduced a new class of subjects for biographical literature. Ascetics simultaneously mirrored and challenged previous philosophical paradigms. Athanasius of Alexandria’s *Life of Antony*, a pioneering piece of Christian biography, represented Antony of Egypt as a stranger to the culture and institutions of *paideia* but as a natural possessor of the virtuous character they aimed to produce.⁵ The juxtaposition of monks and

¹ By philosophical biography, I mean literary productions that “furnish detailed accounts of individuals’ lives” and skillfully employ philosophical language and concepts. See Swain 1997: 1–2.

² Hägg and Rousseau 2000: 4–5.

³ Aristoxenus of Tarentum (fourth century BCE), a student of Aristotle with strong Pythagorean sympathies, used biography to wage an anti-Socratic, anti-Academic battle in a period of contentious philosophical diversity. His portrait of Socrates the irascible money-lender and Plato the plagiarist contrasted with Pythagoras, the wise founder of “a society of virtuous sages.” See Cox 1983: 11. For the surviving fragments, see Wehrli 1944: fragments 11 (Pythagoras), 54 (Socrates), and 64 (Plato).

⁴ See Urbano 2013: ch. 2.

⁵ Rubenson 2000; Urbano 2008. See also the contribution by Gemeinhardt in this volume.

philosophers as competing exemplars and pedagogues was as palpable in real social contexts as it was on the pages of biographies.⁶ Biographers were often active participants in the philosophical field engaged in debates over education, piety, and virtue.

In this essay, I focus on two fifth-century biographies that emerged out of the shifting dynamics of the philosophical field in Late Antiquity in the eastern Roman Empire: the *Religious History* (*Hist. rel.*) of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria, and the *Proclus* (*Procl.*), by Marinus of Neapolis, head of the late Platonist school at Athens. On the surface, hermits, stylites, and chain-wearing monks seem to have little in common with one of Late Antiquity's most celebrated Platonists. But I will demonstrate how these two works served the doctrinal, pedagogical, and competitive aims of biographical literature as conceptions of knowledge and practice were debated and claims to pedagogical and cultural authority contested. In particular, I will argue that these works attempted to conserve and transmit the intellectual heritage of Plato through hermeneutical strategies that wove readings of the Platonic dialogues into biographical narratives. I am not suggesting a direct relationship between the texts. Rather, they testify to the conceptual and practical contours of the intellectual field in Late Antiquity and represent interrelated yet diverging strategies to "save" the Platonic corpus and define its place for philosophical identity and history.

Biography, *Paideia*, and Cultural Competition

Biographical literature and *paideia* were inextricably bound. A subject's educational training usually occupied the opening chapters. Biographers were expert in the literary, linguistic, and cultural knowledge of *paideia*. Biographies contributed to the conservation and reproduction of the values and practices inculcated through *paideia*. More than education and culture, *paideia* was a durable and molding complex of ideas and practices internalized through technical and social practices that shaped the lives of the educated elite and produced "symbolic power," an authority rooted in social prestige, which, in Antiquity, could also transfer into social and political authority.⁷

⁶ See Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 72–80, and Eunapius, *Vit. phil.* 6.11.6. On Eunapius' treatment of Christians, see Bartelink 1969. The Greek orator Libanius, once the teacher of John Chrysostom at Antioch, leveled strong attacks against monks. See, for example Libanius, *Or.* 18.288–9.

⁷ Johnson 1993: 7; Brown 1992: 36–9.

Biographies promoted the means to acquire symbolic power by upholding subjects as ideal paradigms for imitation. To this end, biographies were incorporated into the curricula of philosophical schools in Late Antiquity, where they were read in conjunction with the Platonic dialogues and other texts, such as the Homeric corpus and the Chaldean Oracles. Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, for example, prefaces the *Enneads*, serving as an introduction to the study of Plotinus' philosophy. Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life* introduced a ten-volume *Compendium of Pythagorean Doctrine*, which formed the curriculum of the philosopher's school at Apamea in Syria.⁸ Biographies thus became part of developing canons of school literature.⁹

The philosophical field in Late Antiquity witnessed dramatic innovations in philosophical thinking resulting in shifts in the location of intellectual authority. De-centralized intellectual communities in Italy, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria vied to claim Platonic authority to legitimate their philosophical systems. Their dogmatic understanding of Plato and aversion to Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Academic skepticism, translated into the project of rewriting the narrative of philosophical history. This often entailed excluding the Hellenistic schools and the Academic successors. Porphyry's *Philosophical History* ended with Plato. When he took up a biographical project later in his career, his teacher Plotinus assumed the place of succession. In the fifth century, Proclus asserted that philosophy lay dormant between Plato and Plotinus, a narrative to which the young Augustine also subscribed.¹⁰

Claims to the consecrating authority of this sacred past were made through procuring cultural capital that converted into symbolic power. The possession of texts and of exegetical expertise gained through study and training was the hallmark of a professional philosopher. The prestige of these skills was enhanced by asceticism and a pedigree of noted teachers. These cultural values and goods were not static, however, and were subject to revaluation and scrutiny in times of cultural and social shifts. As new parties of intellectuals entered the field, they posed challenges to pre-existing orthodoxies and authorities. However, intellectuals invested in changing the balance and rules of the game were products of the very *paideia* that produced what they challenged. The Middle Platonists and

⁸ Dillon and Hershbell 1991: 1. O'Meara 2003 outlines the arrangement of the Platonic dialogues in Iamblichus' curriculum (p. 63, table 1).

⁹ Chlup 2012: 39. ¹⁰ Proclus, *Theol. plat.* 1.1, and Augustine, *Acad.* 3.18.41.

Late Platonists posed such a challenge to the established Hellenistic schools, particularly the Stoicism of the early Empire. At the same time, Christian intellectuals such as Justin Martyr and Origen of Alexandria joined the fray and issued challenges as participants in the practices of the same philosophical field.

By the fifth century, education was no longer in the firm grasp of the traditional Greek elite. Baptized Christians and those with sympathies towards Christianity increasingly held positions as grammarians and rhetors. The Emperor Julian's short-lived educational reforms failed to restrict Christians from holding publicly funded teaching positions. The policies of Christian emperors in the fourth and fifth centuries made it increasingly difficult for non-Christians to teach and worship their gods.¹¹ The establishment of an imperially funded academy in Constantinople in 425 with chairs in law, medicine, rhetoric, and philosophy marked a shift in the location of education and ensured it would take a decidedly Christian turn.¹² Pedagogical identity was also in flux as monks were promoted as alternatives to orators and philosophers. At Antioch in the late fourth century, John Chrysostom encouraged parents to send their sons to monasteries to be educated by a "true philosopher."¹³ Perhaps the orator Libanius' most celebrated Christian student, Chrysostom's life and writings are indicative of how competition could arise out of the educational contexts of the fourth century.¹⁴ After abandoning aspirations for a career in oratory and turning to the ascetic life, he became a harsh critic of his former teachers.¹⁵

Custodians of a Precious Legacy

Theodoret was born in Antioch (ca. 393) shortly before John Chrysostom left to become Bishop of Constantinople in 397. We do not know whether his parents heeded Chrysostom's advice not to send their sons to Greek teachers, "worthless men . . . and dogs," who wore the philosopher's cloak and let their hair grow.¹⁶ Theodoret says little about his education. In *Ep.* 81 to the consul Nomus, he wrote that his parents dedicated him to God

¹¹ Watts 2006: 85–6. ¹² On the "university" at Constantinople, see Cameron 1982: 285–7.

¹³ John Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* 21.3. See also Westergren's essay in this volume on the historian Sozomen's description of monks as "ecclesiastical philosophers."

¹⁴ On Libanius and John Chrysostom, see Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.3; Hunter 1989: 129–35; and Cribiore 2007: 100–4.

¹⁵ Kelly 1995: 51–4; Cribiore 2007: 140. ¹⁶ John Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* 21.3 (NPNF).

and educated him accordingly. He must have studied with a grammarian and rhetor in Antioch, the same city where Chrysostom studied with Libanius. It would otherwise be difficult to account for his literary style and thorough knowledge of Greek literature.¹⁷ His writings include well over 100 references to Classical authors – including Homer, Thucydides, Plato, Demosthenes, and Plotinus.¹⁸

Theodoret's silence surrounding his formation in *paideia* contrasts with the details he relates about his contacts with ascetics as an adolescent.¹⁹ He regarded regular visits to the monasteries outside Antioch, like the one at Teleda, as part of his education.²⁰ He frequently visited the monks Macedonius (to whom Theodoret's once-barren mother attributed her son's miraculous conception) and Peter the Galatian.²¹ These visits would have occurred around the age when Theodoret was pursuing rhetorical education.²² In his early twenties, Theodoret entered a monastery in Nicerte, which was built on the ruins of a temple.²³ Located just three miles from Apamea, Nicerte was a thriving intellectual center "geographically at the very heart of Platonism and paganism in Syria."²⁴ Numenius the Neopythagorean, whose works influenced Plotinus and Origen, taught at Apamea. Amelius, the colleague of Plotinus and rival of Porphyry, settled there after Plotinus' death, as did Iamblichus in the fourth century.²⁵ Theodoret wrote the *Therapy for Hellenic Maladies* (*Cur.*) at Nicerte.²⁶ It is the work of a young monk studying and critiquing the Greek philosophers, reading them directly and through the earlier polemical anthologies of Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea.²⁷ It was an exercise in the rhetorics of rebuttal, responding to the claims of Greek philosophy by delineating the boundaries and convergences between Greek and Christian thinkers. Theodoret very likely intended his work to be read by Greek, as well as Christian, intellectuals.²⁸ His frequent direct address to Greeks indicate this: "We who have taken in hand the works of your poets, historians and philosophers, set aside some

¹⁷ Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1977–1979: 51–2. ¹⁸ Urbainczyk 2002: 18–19; Azéma 1981.

¹⁹ While Christian intellectuals like Theodoret were sometimes reticent to discuss their school training, historians, such as Socrates and Sozomen, often praised their educational training and achievements. See Westergren's essay in this volume.

²⁰ Theodoret, *Hist. rel.* 4.10. ²¹ Theodoret, *Hist. rel.* 9.4; 13.18. ²² Cribiore 2007: 31.

²³ Theodoret, *Ep.* 119. ²⁴ Siniossoglou 2008: 39.

²⁵ Amelius: Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 2; Iamblichus: Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2003: xxiii.

²⁶ Canivet 1958: vol. 1, 28–31; Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 86; Siniossoglou 2008: 39. For a dating after Theodoret became bishop in 423, see Papadogiannakis 2012: 4 and Halton 2013: 13. The critical edition of the *Therapy* cited here is Canivet 1958. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

²⁷ Siniossoglou 2008: 11–14.

²⁸ On the intended audience of the *Therapy*, see Siniossoglou 2008: 40–3.

things as destructive and arrange others for the knowledge of teaching; and we bring to you this therapy as an antidote" (*Cur.* 1.127).

How much direct contact Theodoret had with Greek intellectuals during his monastic period is difficult to say. However, as bishop he included Greek teachers and intellectuals in his network of ecclesiastical, political, and cultural bonds. Despite cultural and religious rivalries, Theodoret seemed to engage in a "dance of mutual benefit" with the purveyors of *paideia*, as his correspondence with the sophist Isocassius and other Greek intellectuals demonstrates.²⁹ Theodoret had no qualms about sending Christian young men to Greek teachers. He helped fill their classrooms, and they provided Christians, particularly those preparing for the priesthood, with literary and rhetorical skills.

Marinus of Flavia Neapolis joined the Neoplatonic school of Proclus in Athens in the middle of the fifth century. A convert from the Samaritan religion, Marinus developed an expertise in mathematics and astronomy.³⁰ Working as Proclus' deputy in the operations of the Athenian school, Marinus became his successor, or *diadochos*, around 485, when the school found itself vulnerable to internal struggles. Marinus was neither a strong leader, nor a respected philosopher. He also managed to offend the school's leading political supporter.³¹ When he died, there was great uncertainty about the school's leadership.

In the first year of Marinus' term as *diadochos*, he composed an encomiastic biography of his predecessor entitled *Proclus, Or On Happiness*, a work that has been described as the "most important document on the history of philosophical education at Athens in the fifth century."³² Marinus praises Proclus as the "perfect" incarnation of Platonic philosophy, "without defect," mapping his progress through a scale of virtues (*Procl.* 2). The work also addresses the internal and external pressures experienced by a relatively young institution (less than a century old) bent on surviving in an increasingly hostile Christian society.

The Athenian school, founded towards the end of the fourth century, was steeped in the theurgic Platonism of the fourth-century philosopher Iamblichus.³³ The increased religious, even sacramental, ethos of late Platonism has been characterized as an "effort at safeguarding the

²⁹ Theodoret, *Ep.* P 28; Siniosoglou 2008: 40–2; Schor 2011: 141–3.

³⁰ Damascius, *Isid.* 97A (Athan.); Watts 2006: 113. ³¹ See Watts 2006: 118–23.

³² Saffrey, Segonds, and Luna 2001: xvi. The critical edition is Saffrey, Segonds, and Luna 2001. Translations are taken from Edwards 2000 with occasional modifications.

³³ On the foundations of the fifth-century Neoplatonic school, see Watts 2006: 87–100 and Urbano 2013: 58–65.

Hellenic cultural tradition.”³⁴ The philosophy of Proclus, who became head of the school in 437, combined exegesis of the Platonic dialogues with the rites prescribed in the Chaldean Oracles and Orphic texts. Along with Plato’s *Timaeus*, Proclus counted the Chaldean Oracles among the most important ancient texts (*Procl.* 38). With its headquarters in a large villa on the southern slope of the Acropolis, the school styled itself the rightful successors of Plato. In his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus outlines a myth of the origins of philosophy from its first revelation by the gods to the human race “through one man,” i.e., Plato. Remaining concealed for a period, philosophy came to light again in the teaching of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. It eventually came to rest safely in the hands of Plutarch and Syrianus, and finally Proclus, at Athens.³⁵

Athens had been a bastion of Greek philosophy and religion even as Christianity progressed across other parts of the Empire. It was not until the fifth century that imperial orders introduced significant restrictions and encroachments on polytheistic cult practice and sites.³⁶ This historical context informs the urgency of Proclus’ arrival and activity at Athens. Marinus makes no direct references to Christians or Christianity in the *Proclus*, but subtle resistance is discernible (for example, at *Procl.* 30). As the school was losing its cultural and religious grip on Athens, it avoided, even rejected, intellectual engagement with Christians as a strategy for survival.

Theodoret completed his *Religious History* some time between 431 (shortly after Proclus’ arrival in Athens) and 451.³⁷ A collective biography of Christian ascetics who inhabited Antioch, Cyrrhus, and the outlying regions, the work creates a seemingly unified network out of disparate individuals and communities. As the subtitle of the work “the ascetic way of life” (ἡ ἀσκητική πολιτεία) suggests, Theodoret treats their individual practices as a single way of life (*politeia*) to the extent that “any real sense of difference between individuals evaporates.”³⁸ Practical philosophy is also the subject of the twelfth book of the *Therapy*. Standing in the tradition of Greek biography, the work offers readers a practical guide for admiration and emulation. Previous studies of the *Religious History* have concentrated

³⁴ Chlup 2012: 32. See also Dillon 2007. ³⁵ Proclus, *Theol. plat.* 1.1. ³⁶ Watts 2006: 84–7.

³⁷ Urbainczyk 2002: 23. Price 1985: xv and Krueger 2004: 16 date the work to 440. The critical edition is Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1977–1979. Translations are from Price 1985 with occasional modifications.

³⁸ Cox Miller 2000: 221–2; 232.

on Theodoret's ecclesiastical motivations for the work.³⁹ I suggest here that the *Religious History*, like the *Therapy*, envisioned educated Greeks among its audience and proposed that the monks of Syria fulfilled the Platonic ideal of the lover of wisdom.⁴⁰ Furthermore, both the *Religious History* and the *Proclus* were written within a context of contesting the ownership of the Platonic philosophical heritage and demonstrate the role of biography as a space for negotiating the cultural goods of *paideia*.⁴¹

Who Is the Lover of Wisdom?

Plato took up this question in his dialogue *Theaetetus* (*Tht.*). Socrates states that the true lover of wisdom, consumed with contemplating the good, appears arrogant and foolish to others (*Tht.* 174a). He is so occupied with the intelligible world that he does not know:

where to find the road to the agora, or to the court or the senate house, or any other public assembly in the polis . . . his body alone . . . has a place and home in the polis. His mind [διάνοια], considering all these things petty and worthless, flies off in all directions, as Pindar says “beyond the sky, beneath the earth,” searching the heavens and measuring the plains.⁴²

To achieve the goal of keeping his soul well ordered, he “must try to escape [φεύγειν] from down here to up there as quickly as possible and escape [φυγή] is assimilation [ὁμοίωσις] to God as far as this is possible.” Commitment to this pursuit makes him “just” (δίκαιον) and “venerable” (ἱστίον) (*Tht.* 176a–b).

As has been noted, the passage possesses an inner tension: on the one hand, the philosopher will want to escape from the physical and social world to the intelligible; on the other, practice of the virtues, in the body, is the means to assimilation.⁴³ Plato's just and venerable fool is not alone in this pursuit, but assists others to reach the same goal. He helps improve the condition of souls, correcting their flawed ways of thinking and acting.

³⁹ Edification (Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1977–1979); competition with other monastic communities and extension of episcopal authority (Urbainczyk 2002); crafting devotional practice (Krueger 1997).

⁴⁰ Siniossoglou 2008: 40. Theodoret includes in his audience those “who have not been initiated into divine truths with real accuracy” and the “faithless” (τοὺς ἀπίστους; Theodoret, *Hist. rel.* pro. 10). I regard these as references to non-Christians.

⁴¹ In so doing, I am pursuing lines first traced in Rousseau 1998.

⁴² Plato, *Tht.* 173c–e, my translation. ⁴³ Chlup 2012: 236.

The Platonic themes of escape and assimilation to the divine were frequently cited by ancient thinkers of various stripes.⁴⁴ The Christian Clement of Alexandria took particular interest in them.⁴⁵ As a monk studying Plato, Theodoret included discussion of the *Theaetetus* in book twelve of the *Therapy* on practical philosophy. He inherited his hermeneutical approach from earlier Christian readers: some of Plato's ideas were to be approved and others to be rejected, insofar as they accorded with reason and revelation (*Cur.* 4.32). Plato agreed with Christian thinkers on the principle of imitating God and rightly prescribed escape from the world to achieve this (see *Cur.* 12.20–2). His description of the philosopher applied to the πολιτεία of “our philosophers,” that is, Christian monks. Only the ascetics who devoted themselves to the “gospel philosophy” achieved Plato's ideal. Like the just and venerable fool they “escaped” from civic life, giving up families and material wealth (*Cur.* 12.27). Their civic disengagement and physical withdrawal to the deserts and mountains followed Plato to the letter. Stripped of everything, they proved actually to be good and just, not merely to seem so (*Cur.* 12.30; see also Plato, *Resp.* II 361b–c). In this regard, those considered philosophers – Antisthenes, Diogenes, Crates – failed to live the life prescribed by Plato, and thus were not philosophers (*Cur.* 12.32). The description did not even apply to Socrates, as he did not withdraw from public life.

The method and integrity of Theodoret's reading of Plato has been the subject of recent scholarship. Niketas Siniossoglou has characterized Theodoret's approach to Plato as a “rhetorical mode of interpretation” intended as an apologetic rewriting of Plato that, through conceptual and semantic shifts, aimed to argue for a discontinuity between Plato and the late Platonists.⁴⁶ Siniossoglou argues that Theodoret introduced misreadings and misrepresentations of the Platonic texts and projected foreign Christian vocabulary and concepts onto them. Theodoret's reading of Plato is therefore considered a manipulation, rather than a legitimate (however imperfect) interpretation of the text because of its apologetic intent.⁴⁷ Siniossoglou regards Theodoret's enterprise as a hostile appropriation, or colonization, of Hellenism by Christianity, both of which he considers in an essentialist way.⁴⁸

I would agree that Plato's texts were transformed into “a battleground for competing discourses and rival intellectual paradigms,” but not for the

⁴⁴ See Rubenson's essay in this volume.

⁴⁵ See *Strom.* 2.22.133 where Clement discusses the *Theaetetus*. ⁴⁶ See Siniossoglou 2008.

⁴⁷ Siniossoglou 2008: 110–14. ⁴⁸ Siniossoglou 2010.

same reasons.⁴⁹ The competitive polemics in Theodoret mirror philosophical strategies that were inscribed in the literature and culture in which he was trained. An apologetic mode of interpreting Plato belonged to the Platonist tradition itself, as did the strategy of claiming that one's intellectual opponents had strayed from Plato's intent, and thus had separated themselves from the authentic stream of tradition. Antiochus of Ascalon made such a claim in the first century BCE against Philo of Larissa.⁵⁰ In the second century CE, Numenius of Apamea composed a treatise entitled *On the Disagreement of the Academics against Plato* in which he argued that the entire Academic succession from its beginnings down to Philo and Antiochus misapprehended and distorted Plato.⁵¹ As Yannis Papadogiannakis has noted, a work like Theodoret's *Therapy* was firmly rooted in the therapeutic traditions of Greek philosophy and offered justification for a Christian reading of Greek texts.⁵² Theodoret's reception, rather than refutation, of Plato should be viewed within the contexts of interaction, competition, and identity among intellectuals in Late Antiquity. Late Athenian Platonism, which was not in itself a static tradition, was not the recipient of, but rather an evolution within, the ever-developing philosophical field. To regard it as somehow the "natural" heir of the Platonic heritage is to accept its apologetics. To regard Theodoret's approach as "historical pseudomorphosis" downplays the fact that the Athenian school emerged from a late Platonism that originated in the third century CE and developed simultaneously, and often within similar social contexts, with intellectual Christianities of the late second through fifth centuries.⁵³ Thus, a competitive methodological lens allows us to view the rhetoric of distinction within the context of school activity itself where ideological and identity distinctions were part and parcel of philosophical communities.⁵⁴

Moreover, I would suggest that Theodoret applies a typological reading of Plato, explicitly in the *Therapy* and implicitly in the *Religious History*. In so doing, I am developing Derek Krueger's idea of "typological figuration." As Theodoret typologically paired ascetics with Biblical figures so as "to sustain a close intertextual relationship with sacred history," so by clothing the monks in the language and concepts of the Platonic dialogues, he maintained that they typologically fulfilled Plato's vision of the ideal

⁴⁹ Siniossoglou 2008: 1. ⁵⁰ See Cicero, *Acad.* 1.13–14; Glucker 1978: 103–20.

⁵¹ The text is preserved by Eusebius in *Praep. ev.* 14.5–9. On the text in the context of Late Antique intellectual competition, see Urbano 2014. See Siniossoglou 2008: 20.

⁵² Papadogiannakis 2012: 23–4. ⁵³ Siniossoglou 2008: 56; see also Urbano 2013: ch. 1.

⁵⁴ On the concepts of "monasticism" and "school," see Rubenson's contribution in this volume.

philosopher.⁵⁵ In this way, Theodoret acted as the intellectual interpreter of the monastic life, translating ascetic practice into philosophical vocabulary. As a bishop with monastic training and sympathies, Theodoret, and others like him, bridges Classical education and monasticism via his episcopal authority.⁵⁶ In the *Therapy*, he incorporated the monks into a narrative of philosophical history rooted in the “dependency theory” and woven into a Numenian account of decline and discontinuity that found resolution in the monks who finally achieved Plato’s vision.⁵⁷ The otherwise anonymous monks in the *Therapy* (itself a Christian monastic work) become identifiable individuals in the more mature *Religious History*. Theodoret knew and interacted with many of them personally. The claim to intimate friendship with subjects was characteristic of late antique biography.⁵⁸ Like Plato’s philosopher, the monks used words to affect curative change in the souls of the wicked, both Christians and the “faithless.” The itinerant monk Abraham, later Bishop of Carrhae, rid the city of impiety by “imitating the art of those entrusted with the treatments of bodies,” sometimes using gentle persuasion, other times “astringent medicines” (*Hist. rel.* 17). His words and deeds brought cultivation and health to the city.⁵⁹ Sometimes words were not necessary. Just the sight of ascetics and the spectacle of their practice could effect a healing of the soul.⁶⁰ Symeon the Stylite, for example, acted as a medicine for “those who suffer under the disease of unbelief” (*Hist. rel.* 26.12). Whoever sees him “departs instructed (παίδευθεῖς) in divine things.” Likewise reading the biographical narratives was a therapeutic endeavor: readers could “see” the monks with their minds’ eyes and receive medicine for the soul’s diseases (*Hist. rel.* pro. 2–3).

The Syrian monks also modeled Plato’s prescription for “escape.” Symeon yearned “to fly up [ἀναπτηναι] to heaven and to be separated from this life on earth” (*Hist. rel.* 26.12).⁶¹ Symeon’s iron chains did not impede his ascent, but rather, helped it. He called others to flight, offering lessons (παιδεύματα) twice a day to his visitors and “bidding them look up to heaven and take flight (πέτεσθαι) [and] depart from the

⁵⁵ Krueger 1997: 398–9.

⁵⁶ As Westergren argues in his contribution in this volume, the historian Socrates juxtaposed highly educated Christians and monks so as to posit a compatibility between learnedness and monasticism. See also Rubenson’s contribution.

⁵⁷ See Theodoret, *Cur.* 2.116; 12.43 and *Hist. rel.* pro. A full treatment of the dependency theory is found in Ridings 1995.

⁵⁸ Cox Miller 2000: 213. ⁵⁹ Westergren 2012: 136–7. ⁶⁰ See Frank 2000.

⁶¹ Theodoret uses a compound of the same verb Plato used. See *Th.* 173e.

earth” (*Hist. rel.* 12.25).⁶² Similarly, “though tied to the body, [the monk Polychronius] has a soul with wings and flies through the lower and the upper air . . . [and] perceives continuously the vision of God” (*Hist. rel.* 24.3). The allusion to Socrates’ account of the winged soul, flying “aloft to the region where the gods dwell,” is unmistakable.⁶³

Not surprisingly, the *Theaetetus* was part of the late Platonist curriculum. Iamblichus included it in the first cycle of dialogues studied.⁶⁴ It was one of Proclus’ favorite dialogues (after the *Timaeus*); the philosopher wrote a commentary that has not survived (*Procl.* 38). The *Theaetetus* is also discernible in Marinus’ *Proclus*. The work has been characterized as a “modified biography,” which bears the marks of funeral elegy, panegyric, and philosophical treatise,⁶⁵ and “the most resolutely positive account of the life of a late antique pagan holy man.”⁶⁶ Marinus arranged biographical material partly in chronological order and partly thematically following a scheme of degrees of virtues, from natural to theurgic, to demonstrate that “the activity of his soul proceeded according to perfect virtue [κατ’ ἀρετὴν τελείαν]” (*Procl.* 34).⁶⁷ Furthermore, Marinus, like Theodoret, appeals to his personal knowledge of Proclus to validate his philosophical arguments (for example, *Procl.* 27). In the context of philosophical competition, the work also functions as the social charter of a community of marginalized intellectuals struggling to assert their identity and pedagogical authority in the face of external restrictions.

In the narrative of Proclus’ life, Marinus delineates the Platonic themes of escape and assimilation. Proclus achieved this through a progression of degrees of coexisting virtues, with the lower degrees (natural, political, etc.) co-operating with the higher (purificatory, theurgic).⁶⁸ Likeness to God becomes possible by passing from the political virtues to the purificatory, or cathartic, virtues (*Procl.* 18).⁶⁹ Practice of the purificatory virtues was able to separate Proclus “from the truly leaden world of generation and produce an uncurbed flight (φύγην) from the present world” (*Procl.* 18). For Plotinus the virtues were purificatory in as much as souls were freed from the passions and material interests of the body to focus solely on intelligible goods. Proclus practices them through cult and asceticism, including fasting, vigils, apotropaic purification, ablutions according to

⁶² See *Th.* 175b–d. ⁶³ Plato, *Phaed.* 246d. ⁶⁴ Chlup 2012: 40. ⁶⁵ Blumenthal 1984.

⁶⁶ Watts 2013: 163. ⁶⁷ For a fuller discussion, see Saffrey *et al.* 2001: lxix–xcviii.

⁶⁸ Chlup 2012: 241.

⁶⁹ See Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.2; Proclus, *De dec. dub.* 54.9–10. The notion of the purificatory virtues is suggested in Plato, *Phaedo* 82a–c and developed in later Platonism.

the Orphic and Chaldean rites, a regimen of prayer through hymnody, and the observance of the religious festivals and rites “of every people” (*Procl.* 18–19). For the late Platonist, escape to the intelligible world was aided by accessing divine power through divinely revealed rites, allowing it to enter, communicate with, and transform the soul.⁷⁰ The theurgic reading of the dialogues goes far beyond anything Plato taught. Nor does it accord fully with Plotinus’ understanding of escape as mediated through contemplation.⁷¹ Nevertheless, it is representative of the reception and interpretation of Plato in the late Athenian school as it asserted its identity as guardian of the rites and philosophy of the pre-Christian era.

The Philosopher and Society

Plato did not require absolute physical or social isolation for philosophical escape. The lover of wisdom could be in the world but simultaneously detached from it. The sage of the *Theaetetus* is at first ridiculed for lack of involvement in social and political institutions, but then quickly dizzies critics by dragging them up to see the meaning of things from his perspective. He also offers counsel.⁷² As Plato argued in the *Republic*, the philosopher was necessary for the proper, moral functioning of society.⁷³ This could mean that philosophers themselves ruled, or that philosophers advised rulers.

In the *Therapy*, the young Theodoret applied a hyper-literal reading to the *Theaetetus* by emphasizing the physical withdrawal and isolation of the monks. “Rustic” and “uneducated/uncultured” (ἀπαίδευτος) like herdsmen penned up far from the world, the monks withdrew “far away from the cities” and were subjected to ridicule (*Cur.* 12.32; see also Plato, *Tht.* 175b). None of the philosophers built themselves the mountain shack (σηκὸν ἐν ὄρει) mentioned by Plato.⁷⁴ But many of the monks had established their retreats at secluded martyr shrines (σηκοί; *Cur.* 12.28).⁷⁵ When he wrote the *Religious History*, Theodoret corrected this representation, detailing the participation of some monks in the lives of cities and towns.⁷⁶ He presented this, in part, in light of the Platonic philosophic adviser. Protected by their venerable status, the monks exercised “frank speech” (παρρησία) with God and politicians. Macedonius, an itinerant,

⁷⁰ Chlup 2012: 30–1. ⁷¹ See Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8. ⁷² Plato, *Tht.* 175c–d.

⁷³ Plato, *Resp.* 473d. ⁷⁴ Plato, *Tht.* 174e. ⁷⁵ See Siniosoglou, 2008: 114.

⁷⁶ See Brown 1971 and Gaspar 2008.

Syriac-speaking monk, moved between his remote mountain retreat and Antioch, between wilderness and city. In the agora, Macedonius confronted two generals sent by Theodosius to quell the Riot of the Statues in 387.⁷⁷ Fearing they would engage in mass violence against the population, Macedonius intervened, sending a bold message to the Emperor (which had to be translated from Syriac into Greek): bronze statues were easy to replace, but “it is impossible for you, even though you are emperor, to bring back to life bodies you have slaughtered” (*Hist. rel.* 13.7). Here the rustic, uneducated, and Syriac-speaking monk implicitly becomes the Platonic adviser to the Emperor, counseling him on self-control and the exercise of power,⁷⁸ using “frank speech” (παρρησία) as a “virtue” (ἀρετή) gifted by the Holy Spirit. Explicitly Theodoret evokes a Biblical typology, calling Macedonius “our Elisha,” himself understood through the Platonic lens. The prophets of ancient Israel, while predating the philosophers of Greece, nevertheless also lived out a “high philosophy,” an integration of faith, proclamation, and physical asceticism, which the Syrian monks emulate and reproduce.⁷⁹ Theodoret brings together both philosophical and Biblical paradigms. The episode could make a reader think of the boldness of John the Baptist or Diogenes the Cynic in the face of power.⁸⁰

The mode of Proclus’ escape entailed neither an eremitical withdrawal, nor the detached civic ethics of Plotinus.⁸¹ Nevertheless, in the *Proclus*, escape has both geographical dimensions and civic implications. Marinus’ account of Proclus’ education, for example, always looks ahead to his fated arrival in Athens. Marinus introduces the section on Proclus’ advancement through the stages of *paideia* by describing a dream in which Athena called Proclus to pursue philosophy (*Procl.* 6). Proclus studied in Lycia, Alexandria, and Constantinople with the intent to pursue law, but he returned to Alexandria to study philosophy after a dream calling him to Athens (*Procl.* 9) – Marinus does not say whether this is the same dream.⁸² Disenchanted with his teachers and the study of Aristotle in Alexandria, he developed “a contempt for these institutions” (*Procl.* 10). So he left for Athens around 430 during a period that saw an “exodus” of students from Alexandria.⁸³ He arrived “escorted as it were by all the gods and good daemons who are the custodians of the oracles of philosophy” with the

⁷⁷ See Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19. ⁷⁸ Westergren 2012: 244–5.

⁷⁹ Theodoret, *Hist. rel. pro.* 2.

⁸⁰ John the Baptist: Matt. 14:3–5. Diogenes the Cynic: see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 6.38.

⁸¹ See Dillon 1996: 323–4. ⁸² On dreams see Dillon 2007: 127–9.

⁸³ Watts 2006: 96–7; 204.

purpose of preserving (or “saving,” σώζεται) “the succession of Plato [ἡ Πλάτωνος διαδοχή] . . . without adulteration” (*Procl.* 10). Proclus arrived in the nick of time, just before the gatekeeper locked up – a clear omen, Marinus remarks, of the import of his presence. The geographical movement of this educational narrative suggests a divinely led escape to Athens, away from Christian Constantinople and away from other philosophical centers, sketching out the competing lines of fifth-century education.

In the *Proclus*, Marinus conveys a portrait of the philosopher-adviser invested in the civic, intellectual, and religious life of Athens. Proclus learned the political virtues by studying Aristotle and Plato (*Procl.* 14). Civic involvement was both philosophically and practically relevant to Proclus. He took the need to balance detachment with his social relationships seriously.⁸⁴ Though he did not hold any political office, he became “the self-appointed social gadfly of fifth-century Athens.”⁸⁵ Proclus was a voice of wisdom and philosophic benefactor to one of the last pagan strongholds in the Greek East.⁸⁶ He attended public debates and counseled those in power, “conferring with the *archons* about matters of justice” with “frank speech” (παρησία; *Procl.* 15). Proclus trained others “in political virtues and methods,” such as Archiadas, grandson of his predecessor Plutarch, who served as political advocate for Proclus’ school.⁸⁷ He lent “contemplative support to those who had the courage to throw themselves headlong into the turbid stream of politics.”⁸⁸ In his civic engagements, Proclus acted as he, in his commentary on the *Alcibiades*, taught that the gods did – at once providential and involved, and transcendent and detached.⁸⁹ In him Marinus sees the philosopher who ascends, or escapes, from the sensible world, then descends divinized “into the cave of political affairs” to direct others in “political virtues” for the sake of the common good.⁹⁰ Proclus’ political engagement led to confrontation with Christian authorities intent on securing a firmer grip on Athens. Veiled references to the “giant birds of prey” responsible for the “tempest of affairs . . . blowing against the lawful way of life” may suggest this.⁹¹ Proclus was forced to leave the city for a year in exile. While his political involvement historically “seems to have been largely a failure,” as Edward Watts suggests, Marinus performs some “spin control” as a biographer who presents these events as demonstrations of courage.⁹²

⁸⁴ Chlup 2012: 236. ⁸⁵ Watts 2006: 104. ⁸⁶ Watts 2006: 82–6.

⁸⁷ Marinus, *Procl.* 14; Watts 2006: 107; Chlup 2012: 236. ⁸⁸ Chlup 2012: 247.

⁸⁹ Chlup 2012: 243–4. ⁹⁰ O’Meara 2003: 36, 199.

⁹¹ See Marinus, *Procl.* 15. See also Watts 2006: 103–10. ⁹² Watts 2013: 164–5.

Socrates: Foil and Model

Socrates looms large in the *Therapy* and the *Proclus*. It is not surprising, therefore, to see his legacy contested. This was not a new debate: the Pythagorean Aristoxenus had questioned Socrates' philosophical authority already in the fourth century BCE.⁹³ We should not expect to see a simple acceptance/rejection dichotomy in the fifth-century reception of Socrates. Rather, a more complex dynamic of prioritization emerges that stemmed from contemporary debate over the recognition of philosophical authorities and histories.

Working from the dependency theory, Theodoret charged that the Greeks “went to the school of the barbarians,” drawn particularly to the Hebrews by a desire for *paideia* (*Cur.* 1.17). Interestingly Socrates escapes Theodoret's charge of plagiarism. He praises him as “the best” (ὁ ἄριστος) of philosophers because he knew and taught the truth in accord with natural virtue (*Cur.* 1.17).⁹⁴ This resulted from natural interior gifts, *apart* from *paideia*, at least in his youth (*Cur.* 1.28). Citing Porphyry, Theodoret calls Socrates “completely uncultivated” (ἀπαίδευτον δὲ περὶ πάντα) and barely knowledgeable of “letters” (γράμματα) (*Cur.* 1.30). Ironically, he was “uninitiated” (ἀμύητον) in Greek *paideia* and yet considered the chief philosopher of the Greeks (*Cur.* 1.53). Citing passages from book five of the *Republic* and book three of the *Laws*, Theodoret acknowledges that Socrates rightly counted “as wise those who have acquired [the knowledge of truth], even if they are ignorant of the most elementary things (τὰ πρῶτα στοιχεῖα),” perhaps a reference to basic education (*Cur.* 1.33–6).⁹⁵ Yet despite his natural virtue and intellectual wisdom, Socrates failed to realize Plato's vision because he was a moral failure; he did not *practice* the philosophy he taught and remained enslaved to his passions (*Cur.* 12.68). If the best of Greek philosophers failed, then all did.

Socrates acts as a type, albeit imperfect, of the Christian ascetics in the *Religious History*. The prologue of the work promises a presentation of “the contests of ‘the best’ (ἀρίστων) men, the athletes of virtue” (*Hist. rel. pro.* 1). Their lives teach “philosophy” through visual encounter.⁹⁶ For

⁹³ See footnote 3 above. Theodoret was aware of Aristoxenus' biography of Socrates by reading Porphyry's *Philosophical History*. See Theodoret, *Cur.* 12.61.

⁹⁴ Canivet 1958: vol. 1, 56.

⁹⁵ Trans. Pásztori-Kupán 2006. For the theme of the “uneducated” philosopher, see also Rydell Johnsén in this volume.

⁹⁶ For the charge that Theodoret distorted the meaning of *philosophia*, see Siniosoglou 2008: 110–22. Regarding Siniosoglou's contention that Theodoret excised inquiry and study of the Classics from his understanding of philosophy, it should be recalled that monasteries, such as

Plato the “best men” were the wise and virtuous who directed civic life.⁹⁷ *Paideia* was not required. Like Socrates, the monk Macedonius was rustic and “uninitiated” in *paideia* (*Hist. rel.* 13.8); here Theodoret uses the same phrase he had used of Socrates in the *Therapy*. Language also distanced the Syriac-speaking monks from the Greek classroom. Although Aphrahat was educated in Persia he was still, like Socrates “un-*paideia*-ed” (ἄπαιδευτος) because he lacked formal Greek training. Regardless, he was able to refute “the words of the philosophers” (*Hist. rel.* 8.2).⁹⁸ Certainly not all of Theodoret’s monks were uneducated;⁹⁹ and, as the essay of Westergren in this volume suggests, terminology signaling lack of education may have been used to “point out that a person is not as educated *as* someone else.”¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, those monks who did lack Greek education allowed Theodoret to situate Christian asceticism at the end of a typological trajectory extending from the Hebrews and Socrates. As an educated bishop, he provided the philosophical hermeneutics to understand them.

Socrates is the paradigm of the philosopher, which Proclus successfully replicates. For Marinus, this juxtaposition has a bearing upon Proclus’ integrity as a philosopher and his claim to succession. However, with his distinguished background and education, Proclus cannot be the rustic and un-*paideia*-ed Socrates. Rather, he follows the Plutarchan model of the man endowed with natural virtues who cultivates them through *paideia* and philosophy.¹⁰¹ Proclus possessed inborn virtues of body and soul, “identical with those that Plato proposes as the elements of the philosophic nature” (*Procl.* 4; see also *Timaeus* 42 c–d).¹⁰² His education developed these natural gifts towards virtue, conferring proper learning, guidance, and discipline (*Procl.* 15; see also *Resp.* 492a). Moreover, his fortitude in withstanding extremes of hot and cold recalls Socrates’ self-mastery (*Procl.* 3; see also *Symp.* 219b–220b). As a result, Proclus was “well-ordered” (κόσμιος; *Procl.* 4), just as Proclus had described Socrates.¹⁰³

The figure of Socrates ties Proclus’ career to the origins of philosophy in Athens at a time when this heritage was contested. Marinus’ appeal to

the one at Nicerte where Theodoret wrote the *Therapy* (and presumably used its library), were places of learning and philosophical inquiry. Theodoret’s interest in such things did not cease when he became bishop.

⁹⁷ See Plato, *Resp.* 6.484a–d and *Leg.* 1.643e–644b.

⁹⁸ For further discussion, see Gašpar 2008. ⁹⁹ Urbainczyk 2002: 69–70.

¹⁰⁰ See Westergren in this volume. ¹⁰¹ Duff 1999: 75–7.

¹⁰² Marinus outlines these in *Procl.* 3–6. ¹⁰³ See Proclus, *Alc.* 24.

omens and dreams couches the claim in mythological terms. For example, Proclus' fortuitous stop to take a drink at a shrine dedicated to Socrates (unbeknownst to him) identifies him as the Socrates of his time. When he realized the profundity of this sign, Proclus performed an act of veneration (*Procl.* 10). As head of the Athenian school, Proclus seized authority over the legacy of Socrates and Plato through ritual means by leading the celebrations of their birthdays and performing commemorative rites at their graves, including at the site of the Academy (*Procl.* 23; 36).¹⁰⁴

Divine Intimacy

Plato wrote that the one who was “just, pious and good” was “dear to god”.¹⁰⁵ Late Antique biographies located the philosopher and holy person at a divine-human intersection.¹⁰⁶ Increasingly cultic practices were assigned a role in the achievement of assimilation to God. Worshipping the Olympian gods was in accord with the teaching of Plato and was mostly for the political good, but the theurgy that was coupled with contemplative practices in late Platonism certainly was not the kind of religion he envisioned.¹⁰⁷ Philosophical biographies from Late Antiquity reveal this development, particularly in Iamblichan circles. While Plotinus seems to have shunned civic cult, the philosophers of Eunapius' *Lives* betray a prominent “theurgical orientation.”¹⁰⁸ Intimacy, favor, and cult define Proclus' “natural dearness to the gods”.¹⁰⁹ This began from his conception and birth, which, though not miraculous, were overseen by the tutelary goddess of his birth city, Constantinople. She acted as his “midwife” and was the “reason” (αἰτία) for his coming to be (*Procl.* 6).¹¹⁰ This intimacy with the gods is not simply an individualistic spirituality, but expressive of Proclus' guardianship of cult practices. Marinus described Proclus as the “common hierophant of the whole world,” who worshipped in the manner of all people (excluding Christians, presumably) (*Procl.* 19). John Dillon characterized this as a syncretism motivated by interest in creating a coherent system of all known divinities;¹¹¹ but we should also recognize

¹⁰⁴ Plotinus also celebrated these at his school in Rome. See Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 2.

¹⁰⁵ εὐσεβής . . . θεοφιλής. Plato, *Phileb.* 39e. ¹⁰⁶ Cox 1983: xi. See also Fowden 1982.

¹⁰⁷ Plato, *Leg.* 738 c–d. See Dillon 2007: 120–3. ¹⁰⁸ Cox Miller 2000: 46–9.

¹⁰⁹ τὸ θεοφιλὲς συγγενές; *Procl.* 7.

¹¹⁰ Edwards (2000: 66, n. 66) identified the goddess as Rhea. Saffrey *et al.* (2001: 123, n. 3) opt for Athena.

¹¹¹ Dillon 2007: 131–3.

its reactionary nature in the light of systematic suppression of non-Christian religious traditions.

In his home on the southern slope of the Acropolis, Proclus was literally the neighbor of the gods Asclepius, Dionysus, and Athena, whose shrines were in close proximity (*Procl.* 29). These historic, sacred, and symbolic structures were contested spaces in the fifth and sixth centuries, as Christians began to appropriate them. The philosopher's relationship with Asclepius was particularly strong.¹¹² He visited the god's shrine surreptitiously to petition for healings. Athena appeared to Proclus in a dream requesting to take up residence with him when her statue in the Parthenon was moved "by those who move even the immovable" (*Procl.* 30). With the traditional cults (and the very heritage) of Athens under attack, Proclus' house, already a pedagogical center, became a new cultic center. Proclus' devotion to Cybele is known from references in his writings, including hymns and a lost tract entitled *On the Mother of the Gods*. Marinus writes that Proclus participated in the monthly rites of the Great Mother and received daily benefits from her (*Procl.* 33).¹¹³

Divine intimacy, favor, and cult also characterized the life of Theodoret's monks in the *Religious History*. Collectively they demonstrate the "way of life" (πολιτεία) of those "who have loved God" (τῶν φιλοθέων; *Hist. rel. pro.* 2).¹¹⁴ Related to "loved by God" (θεοφιλής), "God-lover" (φιλόθεος) emphasizes the human component in the divine-human relationship. Appearing in the title of the work, it applies to all of its subjects. The term can be seen as a parallel to "philosopher" (φιλόσοφος): the lover of wisdom is also the lover of God, and, in the Christian worldview, the wisdom of God is the Son of God. Through an intimate friendship with God, the ascetics participate in the divinity of the object of their desire.¹¹⁵ This divinizing intimacy is expressed in the titles "divine" (θεῖος) and "most divine" (θειότατος) ascribed to many of the monks, just as Eunapius applied them to philosophers.¹¹⁶ These philosophers reach their goal not through

¹¹² Dillon 2007: 125–7.

¹¹³ The discovery of a sculpted relief depicting Cybele in a villa on the southern slope of the Acropolis lends support to its identification as the Neoplatonic headquarters. Karivieri 1994: 119–24.

¹¹⁴ For the title, see *Hist. rel. pro.* 10.

¹¹⁵ The treatise *On Divine Love*, an appendix to the *Religious History*, praises the monks as "true philosophers" and "friends of God" who "[despise] everything else and [look] at the Beloved alone" (15).

¹¹⁶ For example, Aphrahat (*Hist. rel.* 8.4) and James (*Hist. rel.* 24.3). Eunapius uses the title for Porphyry (*Vit. phil.* 455) and Chrysanthius (*Vit. phil.* 475).

nature alone, but through their resolve in prayer, liturgical worship, and physical mortification, which attract divine grace (*Hist. rel.* pro. 5). Julian Saba enjoyed the “intimate company” (ὁμιλία) of God alone in his cave where he fasted and sang Psalms (*Hist. rel.* 2.2). This intimate association was also experienced in community life (*Hist. rel.* 25.1). Participation at the “mystic table” of the liturgy constituted the “summit of philosophy” for some.¹¹⁷ Overall it is the chanting of Psalms that constitutes the major form of prayer. We are reminded here of Proclus’ purificatory virtues, which drew him closer to assimilation. On the one hand, the monks lived like angels, but they also ordered their souls and controlled their passions like the Platonic charioteer and helmsman (*Hist. rel.* pro. 6; see also *Phdr.* 254b; 247 c). By grace and by reason, they fulfill the types of Biblical and Platonic tradition.

Theodoret’s *Religious History* and Marinus’ *Proclus* are examples of how biographical literature functioned as arenas of cultural competition in Late Antiquity. Such texts reflected and directed transformations in doctrines, education, and philosophical history. In a field of specialized knowledge, such as philosophy, access to Plato’s texts and the interpretive skills to produce meaning out of them translated into cultural and pedagogic authority. The *Religious History* and the *Proclus* are not simply the works of a Christian and a pagan. Rather they are the products of two intellectuals, formed by *paideia*, engaged in a struggle over the reception and authority of Plato in the face of a rapidly Christianizing educational field.¹¹⁸ Theodoret promoted new centers and models of philosophy in the communities of monks living on the periphery of the Roman Empire. His claim that they fulfilled and surpassed Plato’s vision of the ideal philosopher meant that Plato still commanded an important position in Christian and ascetic formation. Marinus’ praise of Proclus as the embodiment of Platonic virtue and the true successor of Plato at Athens was a more conservative defense made in response to radical changes and restrictions to education made by Christians.

¹¹⁷ See Theodoret, *Hist. rel.* 12.5; 30.1. Teleda and Zeugma are the only two communities explicitly said to have their own churches. See Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1977–1979: 231.

¹¹⁸ In his contribution in this volume, Rubenson enumerates the transmission of tradition as a characteristic feature of a school. In the scenario discussed in this essay, we see Christian and Neoplatonist intellectuals laying claim to the same tradition.

12 | Pythagorean Traditions in Early Christian Asceticism

DANIELE PEVARELLO

In recent years, the interest in the study of the adoption of Neopythagorean sources and pedagogical models in early monasticism has increased. Philip Rousseau, for example, has highlighted how Athanasius' *Life of Antony* depicts the Egyptian monk 'not simply as an exemplar worthy of imitation', but as a genuine teacher, whose methods and arguments display a degree of familiarity with the "philosophical" or Neopythagorean pedagogues of the age'.¹ At the beginning of the last century, Richard Reitzenstein had already advanced the hypothesis that in his *Life of Antony*, Athanasius had reworked a passage from a previous source on the life of Pythagoras, known also to Porphyry and Iamblichus.² Arthur Urbano, in his book on the use of philosophical biographies in cultural competition in Late Antiquity, has argued that Athanasius intends to portray Antony as an anti-model of Pythagoras.³ In recent studies on Antony, Samuel Rubenson has argued that the use of Pythagorean traditions in the *Life of Antony* may reflect a specific, apologetic strategy. Athanasius' depiction of Antony as an uneducated but keen pursuer of ascetic, intellectual and spiritual attainments similar to those of the Pythagoreans would draw attention to Antony as the champion of a superior, though alternative, programme of philosophical education.⁴

This emphasis on Antony as a teacher of philosophy raises the problem of education among early Christian ascetics and its relationship with the philosophical education provided by the philosophical schools of the time. If one focuses on the education of the early monks, the study of which texts early Christian ascetics read and what educational models they adopted becomes as important as the study of the texts they wrote and the life they practised.⁵ As Rubenson has observed, the philosophical education of various early Christian ascetics probably reflected a variety of different pedagogical

¹ Rousseau 2000: 89. ² Reitzenstein 1914: 14–18.

³ See Urbano 2013: especially 217 and 228.

⁴ Rubenson 2013b: 91. As Rubenson observes, 'The emphasis is not on Antony's lack of education but on his alternative education, on the superiority of his educational program and his texts, and thus of his superiority as a teacher.'

⁵ Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2008, and 2013a. See also Rubenson 1995: 119–25 and 2012: 493.

approaches and resulted from the knowledge of a wide array of texts.⁶ Henrik Rydell Johnsen's contribution to this volume, for example, has demonstrated how some early monastic attitudes towards Classical *paideia* are quite analogous to similar views among Epicurean and Cynic philosophers.⁷ In his contribution, Urbano sees Theodoret's reception of Plato in the *Religious Discourse* within the debate about the philosophical legacy of Platonic philosophy in Late Antiquity.⁸

In my contribution, I intend to continue examining the interaction of early monasticism with the educational traditions of the philosophical schools of the Graeco-Roman world by turning to Pythagoreanism. In particular, I argue that a second-century gnomology known as the *Sentences of Sextus* played a significant role in the transmission of traditions and texts issued within the Platonic revival of Pythagoreanism in Roman times and the early ascetic tradition in Egypt.⁹ Since the *Sentences of Sextus* are a collection of sayings assembled by a Christian compiler who adapted and reworked previous Pythagorean material, they offer also a preferred point of observation for the study of the transformation and reformulation of Classical *paideia* in Christian contexts. By taking as an example the treatment of marriage and procreation in the *Sentences*, I shall attempt to illustrate how the Christian compiler creatively reworked his Pythagorean sources. Finally, the example of the *Sentences of Sextus* is also central in illustrating the attitude of early monastic teachers towards the pedagogical repertoire of education in Late Antiquity. By adopting the genre of the collection of sayings, the compiler of the *Sentences of Sextus* shows a substantial conformity with modes and tools of the Classical tradition, which was largely based on the use of gnomonic sources, and anticipates the use of the gnomonic genre in the development of the apophthegmatic literature within the traditions of the Desert Fathers.¹⁰

Early Christian Circles and Pythagorean Education

Scholars lately have shown a revived awareness of the importance of the relationship between early Christianity and the philosophical schools of the

⁶ See Rubenson 2013b: 89. ⁷ See Rydell Johnsen's contribution in this volume.

⁸ See Urbano's contribution to this volume.

⁹ On the philosophical revival of Pythagoreanism in Platonic philosophy, see Kahn 2001: 73 and 105.

¹⁰ On the use of gnomologies in Classical and Late Antique education, see Larsen 2013a and the contributions of Maravela and Larsen in this volume.

Graeco-Roman world. Nordic scholarship, for instance, has occupied a privileged place at the forefront of the investigation of the relationship between early Christianity and Stoicism. In one year, for example, Troels Engberg-Pedersen published a book on Paul's world view in connection with Stoic cosmology, Runar Thorsteinsson published a study on the adoption of Stoic moral teachings in early Christian Rome and the Finnish Tuomas Rasimus and Ismo Dunderberg, with Engberg-Pedersen, edited the volume *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, which considers Stoic influences on the New Testament, the Christian Apocrypha and a number of early Christian authors.¹¹ Although on a smaller scale, the study of the relationship of early Christianity and Platonism has also received new impetus from recent studies ranging from the investigation of the Platonic background of Pauline anthropology to the appropriation of Platonic philosophy in the works of Theodoret of Cyrrhus.¹²

Studies dedicated to the relationship between early Christianity and the Pythagorean tradition, however, have been few in recent times.¹³ Available sources on Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans consist mostly of pseudepigraphic works and are relatively late.¹⁴ In these sources, Pythagorean tenets are merged with doctrines of other philosophical movements, making it problematic for students of early Christianity to evaluate the exact influence of Pythagoreanism on early Christian asceticism.¹⁵

However, references to Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans are found in a number of early Christian writings. These texts show that the ideological competition between the philosophical life of the Pythagoreans and that of the early monks observed in the *Life of Antony* is deeply rooted in the early Christian tradition. As with the Pythagorean allusions in the traditions concerning the monastic ideals of Antony, these texts seem to issue from

¹¹ See Engberg-Pedersen 2010; Thorsteinsson 2010; Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen and Dunderberg 2010. Engberg-Pedersen had already studied Paul and Stoicism in Engberg-Pedersen 2000. This brief overview of Nordic studies on early Christianity and Stoicism would not be complete without mentioning also Huttunen 2009. Outside the Nordic world, see for example Lee 2009.

¹² See van Kooten 2008 and Siniosoglou 2008; see also Arthur Urbano in this volume for Theodoret.

¹³ A notable exception is Gaca 2003. In the recent past, Thom 1994, Bremmer 1992 and Balch 1992 have been central for the study of the relationship between Pythagoreanism and Christianity; prior to them, see also Thom 1989.

¹⁴ Kahn 2001: viii–ix and 105. On the methodological challenges posed by the studying of Pythagorean sources, see also Burkert 1972: 4–12.

¹⁵ Thom 1992 concludes that the influence of Pythagoreanism on early Christianity has been tangential. More positive in this regard are Schattenmann 1979 and Fauth 1987.

an apologetic concern. Christian writers may have referred to the Pythagoreans in their writings following the criticism of pagan polemicists. In fact, pagan polemicists had drawn attention to important analogies between the philosophical and ascetic teachings of Pythagoras and the doctrines and practices of early Christianity. According to Origen, Celsus frequently referred to Pythagoras in his polemical work against the Christians.¹⁶ Celsus had described Jesus' predictions of his death and resurrection as unexceptional when compared with Pythagoras' descent into Hades¹⁷ and had praised Pythagorean vegetarianism as more philosophically sound and rational than the superstitious abstention from pork or sacrificial meat practised by Jews and Christians.¹⁸ In particular, the name of Pythagoras figures in early Christian discussions about the antiquity and authority of Jewish Scriptures in relation to Greek philosophy. These texts maintain that Pythagoras was familiar with the Mosaic Law and that some Pythagorean teachings, in particular those concerning religious devotion and the ascetic discipline, were derived from the teachings of Moses.

Christian traditions such as this benefited from Greek and Jewish sources on the foreign character of Pythagoras' philosophy. Building on traditions which postulated a primary relationship between Judaism and the Pythagoreans, Christian authors attempted to place the core texts of early Christian education and devotion – the Law of Moses and with it, the Christian Scriptures – at the very centre of the Greek philosophical tradition. Origen, for example, refers to the lost biography of Pythagoras by Hermippus of Smyrna, who claimed that Pythagoras' philosophy had originated from Judaism.¹⁹ In *Praep. ev.* 13.12, Eusebius of Caesarea refers to the testimony of the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, who also claimed that Pythagoras, together with Socrates and Plato, had known the Law of Moses. In this way personalities of the Greek and the Roman philosophical canon traditionally connected with Pythagoreanism could be portrayed as followers of Moses. Such was the case with the Roman King Numa, whose religious reform in favour of an aniconic cult of the traditional Roman deities is presented by Clement of Alexandria as an attempt to introduce

¹⁶ Origen, *Cels.* 1.32, see Chadwick 1953: xxiii.

¹⁷ On Pythagoras descending into Hades, see for example Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 8.4, 21 and 41.

¹⁸ See *Cels.* 5.41 and 49 and 8.28. On Pythagorean vegetarianism, see for example Burkert 1972: 180–2 and Cornelli 2013: 70–1.

¹⁹ See *Cels.* 1.15–16. Here Origen also reports the views of the Pythagorean Numenius who included the Jews among the people who believed in an incorporeal god.

a Mosaic form of devotion in ancient Rome.²⁰ These Christian views reflected a similar attitude towards Pythagoreanism found in Jewish authors such as Josephus and Philo. In his writings, Philo of Alexandria seems to show a positive attitude towards Pythagoreanism, describing the followers of Pythagoras as a 'most sacred sect' (ἱερώτατος θιάσος).²¹ Before Origen, Josephus had referred to Hermippus' testimony on Pythagoras in *Ap.* 1.163 and 165. In *Ap.* 1.14–15, however, Josephus emphasises the cultural struggle between the Pythagorean way of life and Judaism, raising doubts about the originality of thought of the Greek thinkers and claiming that not only Pythagoras, but also Pherecydes and Thales adopted their views from foreign populations like the Egyptians and the Chaldeans.²² According to Josephus, Pythagoras not only knew the Mosaic Law, but had been an 'enthusiastic follower' (ζηλωτής) of Judaism.²³ Traditions that ascribed Pythagoras' teachings to Moses and reduced them to a mere repetition of Jewish, and also Christian, traditions were unquestionably convenient for the purposes of early Christian apologists. The interest shown by early monastic texts in emulating the philosophical life of the Pythagoreans, however, may also suggest the existence of points of contact between the Pythagorean tradition and the formative experience of early Christian circles. Traditions linking Pythagorean doctrines and practices with Christian groups are mentioned by early Christian authors in relation to circles which endorsed heretical views. In *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.6–7, Eusebius testifies that the followers of Basilides had adopted a standard notion of the Pythagorean educational tradition, imposing on new adepts a period of silence of five years like that practised in Pythagorean schools.²⁴

Irenaeus in *Haer.* 1.25.6 provides valuable information on the educational setting of some early Christian circles, claiming, for example, that the followers of Carpocrates used to pay homage to an image of Christ

²⁰ *Strom.* 1.15.71. On King Numa and his relationship with Pythagoreanism, see Plutarch, *Num.* 1. 2–3 and 8.4–10. The tradition is also mentioned in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.6. On Numa's religious reform, see Hooker 1963.

²¹ Philo, *Prob.* 2.

²² See also Josephus, *Ap.* 2.168, where Josephus argues that Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato and the Stoics shared the same idea of God found in the Jewish law. Josephus also emphasises analogies between Judaism and Pythagoreanism in *Ant.* 15.371, where he claims that the followers of the Jewish sect of the Essenes and the Pythagoreans have the same 'way of life' (δίαίτα). On Pythagorean elements in Josephus' characterization of the Essenes, see Taylor 2004.

²³ Josephus, *Ap.* 1.162.

²⁴ On the practice of a five-year silence in Pythagorean education, see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 8.10, and Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 72. See also Burkert 1972: 179 and 192 and Kahn 2001: 8.

alongside the images of Pythagoras and other philosophers.²⁵ Apart from the polemical tenor of Irenaeus' text, the presence of images of Pythagoras among the Carpocratians could shed some light on the nature of their circle. During the excavations of a large house in Carian Aphrodisias in 1981–2, archaeologists unearthed a shield portrait of Pythagoras dating somewhere from the fourth to the fifth century CE. The portrait was probably part of a larger scene displaying the images of other philosophers and writers such as Pindar, Alcibiades, Socrates, Aristotle and Apollonius and those of an old philosopher, a young pupil and a sophist.²⁶ The architecture of the building together with its decorations suggests that the house may have been a place of education and probably a school of higher philosophical learning rather than the mansion of a local dignitary.²⁷ Although the exact character of the school cannot be established with certainty, the archaeological finds from Aphrodisias seem to offer a valuable example of decorative art in philosophical schools in Late Antiquity.²⁸

Insinuating that the practices of the Carpocratians were idolatrous, Irenaeus describes in *Haer.* 1.25.6 how the Carpocratians used to put garlands on the images of the philosophers (Lat. *et has (imagines) coronant*) in pagan fashion (Lat. *ut gentes faciunt*). The evidence offered by the archaeological finds at the philosophical school of Aphrodisias, however, may suggest a different explanation for the activities of the followers of Carpocrates. The setting in which the Carpocratians operated seems to resemble that of philosophical educational institutions of the time.²⁹ Although the presence of portraits of Pythagoras and other philosophers does not say much about the philosophical character of the doctrines of the Carpocratians, it seems likely that they understood their activities as belonging to a philosophical school where Pythagoras was held in great

²⁵ *Haer.* 1.25.6. A similar account is given also in Augustine, *Haer.* 7 (PL 42.27), and John of Damascus, *Haer.* 27 (PG 94.693); see Whittaker, J. 1979: 224, n. 33. Irenaeus links the Valentinians as well to Pythagoreanism, see *Haer.* 1.1.1.

²⁶ On the excavations of the house of Aphrodisias, see Smith 1990.

²⁷ Smith 1990: 130, see also Cribiore 2007: 46–7.

²⁸ Smith 1990: 153–4 tends to identify the school with that of the Neoplatonic Asclepiodotus of Alexandria, active in Aphrodisias in the second half of the fifth century CE. Cribiore 2007: 67 suggests that the school could be connected to the fourth-century sophist and philosopher Eupeithius.

²⁹ Winrich Löhr sees the practices of the Carpocratians in the light of the cult of deified philosophers, worshipped like heroes together with the Muses in philosophical circles in Late Antiquity. According to Löhr, the Carpocratians may have perceived themselves not only as a philosophical school, but also as a religious confraternity or a Christian *thiasos*, Löhr 1994: 35–6.

repute.³⁰ Eusebius of Caesarea's testimony of the practice of a five-year silence among the followers of Basilides and Irenaeus' observations on the practices of the Carpocratians, suggest that some early Christian circles intended to replicate the educational function of Graeco-Roman schools of advanced education. These Christian circles even adopted pedagogic solutions typical of the educational tradition of the Pythagoreans, such as the discipline of silence.³¹

Although tinged with polemical undertones, the mention of Pythagoras in connection with Moses shows that early Christian authors shared an interest in the teachings of the Pythagoreans with the philosophers of their age. In order to illustrate how early ascetics and monks in their educational curriculum included pedagogical solutions and sources traditionally associated with the Pythagoreans, however, it is necessary to ascertain whether early Christian ascetics had access to and made use of Pythagorean sources and teachings.

The Example of the *Sentences of Sextus*

An effective example of the influence of Pythagorean sources on early Christian education is provided by the monastic use of Pythagorean gnomologies and collections of sayings of Pythagoras. In particular, a second-century Christian gnomology known as *The Sentences of Sextus* (Gr. γνώμαι Σέξτου) may offer insight into the study of the interaction between Christian and Pythagorean ascetic traditions.³² The peculiar history of the composition of the *Sentences* makes this collection a rather exceptional case. Compiled, possibly in Alexandria,³³ towards the end of the second century CE, the *Sentences*

³⁰ Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Diogenes and Aristotle, but even Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, were part of a veritable canon of cultural 'heroes' in the Roman Empire; see Morgan 2007: 275. Smith 1990: 143 suggests that the portrait of Pythagoras in the Aphrodisias house hints at his status as 'patron saint' of Neoplatonism. On Irenaeus' portrayal of the followers of Carpocrates as a philosophical school, see Brent 1995: 74–6. Lampe 2003: 320 draws attention to the presence of Neopythagorean elements in the teachings of the Carpocratians.

³¹ On the influence of Neopythagoreanism on the Christian Gnostics of Alexandria, see also Grant 1971: 136. Richard Norris has argued that Justin Martyr perceived Christianity as a philosophical school modelled on those of Pythagoras and the Stoics, see Norris 2004: 82.

³² The edition of the Greek text of the *Sentences* with five analytical studies can be found in Chadwick 1959. For an English translation of the *Sentences*, see Edwards and Wild 1981 and more recently Wilson 2012. On asceticism in the *Sentences*, see also Pevarello 2013.

³³ Wilson 2012: 11 is in favour of an Egyptian provenance for the *Sentences*. See also Meeks 1993: 147.

of *Sextus* are considered by most commentators to be a Christian rewriting of a pagan gnostic source.³⁴

Parts of *Sextus*' source material are still extant in non-Christianised form in two Greek gnomologies – the *Chreiai* of Clitarchus and the so-called *Pythagorean Sentences* – and in Porphyry's letter *Ad Marcellam* (ca. 300 CE).³⁵ Although the *Sentences* share material with all the pagan witnesses of their tradition, they are not directly dependent on any of them. The most widely accepted hypothesis is that each collection represents an independent recension of a lost pagan gnostic source.³⁶

The importance of the *Sentences of Sextus* for early monastic education lies in their widespread diffusion in monastic libraries belonging to Eastern as well as Western ascetic traditions. The presence of a version of the *Sentences* in codex XII of the Nag Hammadi Library suggests that in the fourth century CE the collection was sufficiently prominent among Egyptian monks to be read and translated into Coptic.³⁷ By the fifth or at latest sixth century CE, the collection had spread among Syrian monks in two different Syriac recensions, which Paul de Lagarde edited in 1858 from the seven Syriac manuscripts of the *Sentences* owned by the British Library.³⁸ Partial translations of *Sextus* are extant also in Armenian, probably compiled by Evagrian monks, and in Georgian and Ge'ez.³⁹ The Latin translation of Rufinus, completed around the year 400 CE, facilitated the dissemination of the *Sentences* in the monastic tradition of

³⁴ On the problems connected with the reconstruction of *Sextus*' pagan source material, see Chadwick 1959: 158–9.

³⁵ The Greek text of the *Chreiai* of Clitarchus can be found in Chadwick 1959: 73–83. For the Greek text of the *Pythagorean Sentences*, see Chadwick 1959: 84–94. Clitarchus' collection has been preserved in manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, while the *Pythagorean Sentences* survive in a Greek manuscript of the tenth century, the Patmiensis gr. 263. The composition date of the two collections remains uncertain. On the composition date of Porphyry's *Ad Marcellam*, see Whittaker, H. 2001: 150–1.

³⁶ On *Sextus*' lost gnostic source, see Wilson 2012: 21–3. For a comprehensive stemma of the tradition of the source material of the *Sentences* and their pagan counterparts, see Turner 1996: 109.

³⁷ Although only five pages of the original manuscript survive, it is likely that codex XII contained the Coptic translation of the entire work, see Poirier 1983 and Wisse 1990. On the monastic use and origin of the codices of the Nag Hammadi Library, see Rubenson 2012: 490, Lundhaug 2009 and the contribution of Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott in this volume.

³⁸ The text of all extant maxims from the *Sentences of Sextus* in Syriac can be found in de Lagarde 1858: 1–31, see also Gildemeister 1873: xxx–viii and Chadwick 1959: 6. Ryssel 1895–1897 argues that the Syriac translations came almost certainly from a monastic environment.

³⁹ On the Armenian translation of the *Sentences*, see Muyldermans 1929 and Hermann 1938. The Georgian translation has been studied in Garitte 1959, while the few sentences of *Sextus* occurring in Ethiopian collections of sayings are mentioned in Cornill 1875: 21–2.

the West.⁴⁰ Sentences belonging to Sextus' collection can be found in a number of Western monastic rules, from the *Rule* of Benedict to the *Rule of the Master* and the *Monastic Rule* of Columbanus.⁴¹

The pagan gnostic source used by Sextus was rather eclectic, featuring material which could be variously linked to Platonism, Stoicism and, less frequently, Cynicism. The conceptual framework of the source, however, was Pythagorean, as shown by references to the practice of silence (*Sext.* 427 = *Pyth.* 14 = *Marc.* 16.11), great concern for purity (*Sext.* 60 and 67) and diet (*Sext.* 109), emphasis on communality of goods (*Sext.* 266, *Clit.* 90) and a strictly procreationist approach to sexuality (*Clit.* 70).⁴² As part of Sextus' tradition has been handed down under the title *Pythagorean Sentences* and some sentences from Sextus' source material are listed in Stobaeus' *Florilegium* under the label 'of Pythagoras' (Gr. Πυθαγόρου), it is very likely that Sextus' source originated among the Pythagoreans.⁴³ The *Sentences of Sextus* also present numerous parallels with other collections belonging to the vast corpus of Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, in particular the *Sentences* of Pseudo-Demophilus and the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*.⁴⁴

Gnomologies, collections of popular proverbs, *chreiai* and *exempla* had a central role in Graeco-Roman education. Papyrological evidence shows that gnostic sources were copied and disseminated by teachers and pupils alike.⁴⁵ Short and simple enough to be reproduced without effort, gnostic sayings offered the twofold advantage of introducing pupils to literacy while conveying some basic form of moral instruction.⁴⁶ Pythagorean collections of sayings, especially compilations of Pythagoras' *akousmata*,

⁴⁰ On Rufinus' Latin translation, see Chadwick 1959:117–37 and above all Bouffartigue 1979.

⁴¹ Benedict, *Reg.* 7 (PL 66:374b–c); *Regula magistri* 9 and 11 (PL 88:965c and 973d) and Columbanus, *Regula* PL 80.215b. On the diffusion of the *Sentences* in Western monasticism, see Chadwick 1959: 124–5 and Pevarello 2013: 33–5.

⁴² On Pythagorean communality, see Kahn 2001: 7–8. On purity, see Cornelli 2013: 82 and on Pythagorean procreationism, see Gaca 2000.

⁴³ For example *Sext.* 152 appears also with minor variations in *Clit.* 28, as well as *Pyth.* 7, *Marc.* 14 and in Stobaeus *Flor.* 3.34.11 as a saying of Pythagoras: see Chadwick 1959: 169 and Wilson 2012: 181–2. See also *Pyth.* 86, which occurs under the subheading Πυθαγόρου γνῶμαι in *Flor.* 3.1.37. The impression that these collections possess a Pythagorean 'feel' is also supported by the confidence with which Jerome mistakenly attributed the composition of the *Sentences* to a Pythagorean philosopher in *Ep.* 133.3; see also *Comm. Ezech.* 6 (PL 25:173c).

⁴⁴ See for example Pseudo-Demophilus *Sent.* 42 (*Sext.* 17), *Sent.* 16 (*Pyth.* 30 and *Sext.* 18) and *Sent.* 28 (*Pyth.* 64 and *Sext.* 285). For a complete list of parallels between Sextus and the *Sentences* of Pseudo-Demophilus, see Sodano 1991. Concerning the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, similar traditions lie for example behind *Carm. aur.* 9–11 and *Sext.* 435: see Thom 1995: 127.

⁴⁵ Morgan 2007: 5–6 and 60.

⁴⁶ On the use of gnomologies in the ancient world, especially for the education of children, see Bloomer 2013: 458–9.

were no exception.⁴⁷ Collections of Pythagorean sayings were in all probability a core aspect of the instruction of new adherents to Pythagoreanism, constituting a sort of Pythagorean catechism such as that compiled by Iamblichus in *Vit. Pyth.* 18.82–6.⁴⁸ In *Vit. phil.* 8.6, Diogenes Laertius reinforces the reputation of Pythagoras as an educator, claiming that one of the three lost works authored by Pythagoras, the *Paideutikon*, may have been entirely devoted to the theme of education.⁴⁹ The use of Pythagorean gnomic sources, however, was not limited to Pythagorean or Neopythagorean circles, but had wider application in the education of the young. In his collection of gnomic instructions to Demonius, the son of Hipponicus, for example, Pseudo-Isocrates included a selection of Pythagorean sayings.⁵⁰ In his treatise on the education of children, Pseudo-Plutarch stresses the importance of making a collection (Gr. συλλογή) of the works of Classical writers to form a repertoire for the education of young people.⁵¹ In *Lib. ed.* 12d–f, Pseudo-Plutarch inserts a long list of Pythagorean *akousmata* with comments, explaining that the study of the sayings of Pythagoras facilitates the children's acquisition of virtue.

As Rubenson, based on the work by Larsen, has observed, there are 'clear similarities' between some literary products of early monastic education, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and 'maxims, sentences and poignant stories used for educational purposes' in the Greek and Roman world.⁵² Collections of sayings such as the Greek *Sentences of Menander* and, later on, the Latin *Dicta Catonis* are known to have been employed to a great extent in monastic education.⁵³ The significance of studying the *Sentences of Sextus*, however, resides in the fact that a number of the sentences Christianised by Sextus survive in a non-Christianised form in the other witnesses of Sextus' source material. Usually, the Christian redactor limited

⁴⁷ Although written collections of Pythagorean *akousmata* or *symbola* are relatively late, Burkert 1972: 166 suggests that their origin is pre-Platonic. Thom 1994: 95 argues that the passage from a merely oral transmission of the *akousmata* to a written one may have started as early as 400 BCE.

⁴⁸ On the sayings of Pythagoras as a veritable Pythagorean catechism, see Delatte 1914: 307 and Thom 1994: 102.

⁴⁹ On Pythagoras' reputation as an educator, see also Plato, *Resp.* 600a and Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 15.64. On the Pythagorean educational system, see also O'Meara 2007: 151.

⁵⁰ Pseudo-Isocrates, *Demon.* 12 and 19, see Thom 1994: 94, n. 4.

⁵¹ Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 8b, see Morgan 1998: 148–9.

⁵² Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2008, and Rubenson 2012: 498.

⁵³ On the *Apophthegmata Patrum* as an educational alternative to the *Sentences of Menander*, see Larsen 2013a; cf. Rubenson 2012: 504. The highly Christianised *Dicta Catonis* probably originated from the fourth century CE, although they contain material which may date to the second century CE or earlier: see Morgan 1998: 121–2 and 2007: 87 in particular, n. 15.

his interpolations to the minimum, leaving most sentences unchanged. In some cases, however, Sextus added Biblical sayings to his collection, recast in a gnomic style similar to that of his source, or modified pagan sentences to suit better a Christian ascetic readership.⁵⁴

Reading Sextus alongside the pagan witnesses of his source material contributes to a better understanding of the adoption of Pythagorean gnomic sources into early Christian asceticism and early monastic education. In his comment to the edition of the Greek text of Sextus, Henry Chadwick observes, 'With adjustments here and there the language of Stoic and Pythagorean wisdom could pass in Christian circles.'⁵⁵ Examples of Sextus' reception of Pythagorean moral tenets and ascetic discipline, however, show how the adoption of Pythagorean material stimulated a creative response in the Christian epitomiser, who negotiated between those aspects of the Pythagorean tradition which suited his ascetic views, and those which needed a careful reformulation before being included in his collection.

Marriage and Celibacy

Sext. 230a–40 contains an extensive section of the *Sentences* dedicated to marital and sexual discipline. A comparison between this passage and a shorter section in the *Chreiai* of Clitarchus (*Clit.* 68–76) shows how Sextus was largely dependent on his pagan source material for the composition of his discourse on sexual morality. Although the two sections differ in length and content, they seem to draw most of their content from the same material. In particular, the two collections have three sentences in common (*Clit.* 71 = *Sext.* 231, *Clit.* 72 = *Sext.* 238 and *Clit.* 73 = *Sext.* 240). Even where the two sections differ, they display linguistic affinities which point to a common source.⁵⁶ This is the case with *Sext.* 230b, which does not appear in Clitarchus' collection, but begins with the same imperative 'marry' (Gr. γάμει) as *Clit.* 69. Sentences *Sext.* 230a, 233–4 and 239 are probably to be considered additions by the Christian redactor as they are

⁵⁴ Chadwick 1959: 138 observes that Sextus' Christian beliefs thoroughly determined his selection from and subtle modifications of the pagan material which he used. On the ascetic character of the *Sentences*, see Pevarello 2013: 203–10.

⁵⁵ Chadwick 1959: 160.

⁵⁶ *Clit.* 68, 74 and 76, concerned with the relationship between parents and children, and *Clit.* 75 (*Sext.* 513), concerned with marital faithfulness, probably belonged to this common source.

not attested in any pagan witness of Sextus' source and seem to contain allusions to New Testament sayings.⁵⁷ Apart from the Christian additions, the sentences shared by Sextus and Clitarchus appear in the same order, reinforcing the impression of a common source.

Scholars have looked to this section of the *Sentences* as an example of Sextus' moderate views on asceticism, building on his seemingly positive mention of married Christians in *Sext.* 239.⁵⁸ If compared with *Clit.* 68–76, however, Sextus' views on marital life appear less favourable than those of his pagan source. Contrary to Clitarchus, Sextus opens his section with a sentence advocating celibacy, rather than marriage:

γάμον γὰρ δίδωσίν σοι παραιτεῖσθαι ἵνα ζήσης ὡς πάρεδρος θεῷ.

It is granted you to decline marriage so that you might live as a partner to God (*Sext.* 230a).⁵⁹

This sentence differs considerably from *Clit.* 69, which encourages readers to marry, though under specific circumstances.⁶⁰ Since it does not occur in any pagan witness, *Sext.* 230a could be an addition by the Christian redactor. In particular, the invitation to live 'as a partner to God' (Gr. ὡς πάρεδρος θεῷ) may contain a reference to Paul's discourse on sexual morality in 1 Cor. 7. The term 'partner' (πάρεδρος) is never used in the pagan witnesses of Sextus' source. The word is not found either in the New Testament. It is probably for this reason that scholars do not list *Sext.* 230a among the sentences of Sextus which contain Biblical allusions.⁶¹ In 1 Cor. 7.32–4, however, Paul expresses his thoughts on celibacy, explaining that married Christians are 'divided' between their devotion to God and their familial duties, while celibate Christians are 'free from anxieties'.⁶² In his plea for celibacy, Paul explains:

I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7.35).

⁵⁷ Compare in particular *Sext.* 233 'Know that you are an adulterer if you even intend to commit adultery' with Jesus' saying in Matt. 5.28. *Sext.* 234 and 239 seem to use Christian terminology: see Chadwick 1959: 172–3.

⁵⁸ Meeks 1993: 149 argues, 'Sextus prizes *enkrateia*, but thinks it can be exercised by the married.'

⁵⁹ English translation Wilson 2012: 240. ⁶⁰ γάμει δυνατὸς ὦν ἄρχειν, *Clit.* 69.

⁶¹ A list of sentences by Sextus alluding to Biblical material can be found in Chadwick 1959: 139–40 and Wilson 2012: 25–6. For a more comprehensive study of Sextus' use of Biblical references, see Delling 1961, which nonetheless overlooks *Sext.* 230a.

⁶² All Biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

The phrase ‘unhindered devotion to the Lord’ (Gr. εὐπάρεδρον τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπερισπάστως) contains an unusual expression. The adjective εὐπάρεδρος (‘devoted’) never occurs in Greek literature before Paul and is also poorly attested after Paul’s time in early Christian literature, occurring about forty times, mostly in quotations of 1 Cor. 7.35.⁶³ Commentators are inclined to consider the word εὐπάρεδρος to be a Pauline coinage.⁶⁴ Both *Sext.* 230a and 1 Cor. 7.35 understand celibacy as an opportunity for an undisturbed relationship with God. Sextus and Paul express this undisturbed relationship between the celibate and God in similar terms, as being πάρεδρος to God or εὐπάρεδρος to the Lord, respectively. Given that Sextus shows a tendency to adapt Biblical quotations to the gnomic style and more literary language of his pagan source, it is probable that Sextus interpolated the somewhat unusual εὐπάρεδρος of 1 Cor. 7.35 with the more conventional πάρεδρος in *Sext.* 230a.⁶⁵ Sextus’ interpolation offers an example of the creative effort of the Christian compiler in combining Biblical material with the Pythagorean tenets of his gnomic tradition. The positive invitation to marry found in the Pythagorean source is reinterpreted with a more ascetic proposition in favour of celibacy with the help of a Biblical quotation reshaped into a gnomic saying.

The first part of *Sext.* 230a ‘you are allowed to reject marriage’ (γάμον γὰρ δίδωσίν σοι παραιτεῖσθαι) also contains a possible reference to pagan material. In *Strom.* 2.23.138, Clement of Alexandria records a fragment of Democritus saying, ‘Democritus declines marriage and procreation’ (Gr. Δημόκριτος δὲ γάμον καὶ παιδοποιῖαν παραιτεῖται) because they distract people from more important things. Democritus’ fragment is linguistically close to *Sext.* 230a. Democritus refers to ‘marriage and procreation’ (γάμον καὶ παιδοποιῖαν), while *Sext.* 230a refers only to marriage. Procreation, however, features in the next line, which opens with a reference to ‘marriage and procreation’ (γάμει καὶ παιδοποιού) in the same order as in Democritus’ fragment.⁶⁶ Although a direct dependency of *Sext.* 230a upon Democritus’ fragment cannot be established with certainty, the possibility that Sextus may have meant to refer to it deserves serious consideration, as *Strom.* 2.23.138 shows that Alexandrian Christians were familiar with the fragment.

⁶³ See for example *Ps.-Clem. Virg.* 1.7.2; Clement, *Strom.* 4.5.21 and 4.23.149; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 1.9.7; Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. de Virg.* 4.58; Cyril of Alexandria, PG 72.805, 808 and 812.

⁶⁴ See Lietzmann 1949: 35 and Gingrich 1969: 176. ⁶⁵ See Pevarello 2013: 70–5.

⁶⁶ γάμει καὶ παιδοποιού χαλεπὸν εἰδὼς ἑκάτερον· εἰ δὲ καθάπερ εἰδὼς πόλεμον ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἀνδρίζοιο, καὶ γάμει καὶ παιδοποιού, *Sext.* 230b.

Unlike Democritus, the Pythagoreans did not support celibacy, as they perceived marriage and procreation as a civic duty.⁶⁷ The analysis of *Sext.* 230a–b shows that Sextus did not limit his editorial work to interpolating his Pythagorean source, which promoted marriage (see *Clit.* 69), with a new sentence reproducing in gnomic style Paul's views about celibacy in 1 Cor. 7.37. In all probability, he also reinforced his defence of celibacy by alluding to a fragment of Democritus which seemed to support his own ascetic views. The Christian epitomiser then not only tried to achieve a uniformity of style by treating New Testament quotations as a gnomic source, but also ensured continuity between his Christian ascetic views and the Greek gnomic tradition by retrieving a philosophical fragment in support of his argument.

Christian Asceticism and Pythagorean Procreationism

The example of *Sext.* 230a has shown how Sextus' editorial work tends to steer the views of his Pythagorean source towards a more strictly ascetic understanding of sexual morality by interpolating his source with new material, probably derived from the New Testament. In other cases, Sextus attains similar results by omitting or displacing some maxims of his source without further additions. This is the case with *Sext.* 231, which in Sextus' collection reads as an exhortation to strict sexual continence even within marriage:

μοιχρὸς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γυναικὸς πᾶς ὁ ἀκόλαστος.

Every intemperate person is an adulterer with his own wife (*Sext.* 231).⁶⁸

As it stands, this sentence indicates disapproval of any unrestrained expressions of sexual desire, even among married people. This may be the reason why *Sext.* 231 had considerable influence in the later ascetic tradition. The sentence is quoted twice in Jerome (*Jov.* 1.49 and *Comm. Ezech.* 6) as well as in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (PL 192:920) and other medieval authors.⁶⁹ *Sext.* 231, however, reproduces almost exactly a pagan tradition preserved in *Clit.* 71. If considered within its context, *Clit.*

⁶⁷ Burkert 1972: 178, n. 94 observes that later traditions which present Pythagoras as a celibate man are contrary to the Pythagorean tradition. On reproduction as a civic duty in Plato and among the Pythagoreans, see Gaca 2000: 123–4.

⁶⁸ Tr. Wilson 2012: 240.

⁶⁹ See Jonas of Orléans, PL 106.183a and Thomas of Perseigne, PL 206.116a.

71 presents some specifically Pythagorean features that are lost in Sextus' version, in spite of their almost identical phraseology:

ὁρος ἀφροδισίων παιδοποιΐα.
μοιχός ἐστι τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναικὸς πᾶς ὁ ἀκόλαστος.

The limit of sexual pleasures is the procreation of children.

Every unrestrained husband is an adulterer with his [own] wife (*Clit.* 70–1).

This passage conveys a strict procreationism, the principle according to which sexual intercourse should aim exclusively at reproduction and be otherwise rejected. Although procreationist elements can be found as well in the works of authors not directly connected with Pythagoreanism,⁷⁰ procreationism is a distinctively Pythagorean concept.⁷¹ According to the Pythagoreans, marriage should be exclusively intended for reproduction, banning any other sexual practice meant to pursue pleasure whether extramarital, homoerotic or autoerotic.⁷² The Pythagoreans believed also that reproductive marital sex should happen in a self-restrained and detached manner without yielding to those passions and appetites which enslave the soul to the body. According to the Pythagoreans, an unrestrained display of passion during intercourse would interfere with the moral balance of the conceived and be potentially damaging for the offspring. The children of unrestrained parents were believed to be more likely to display later on the same sensual disposition that their unrestrained parents had at the moment of conception.⁷³

If seen in the light of Pythagorean procreationism, *Clit.* 70–1 form a logical unit. Clitarchus' initial invitation to marriage (*Clit.* 69) is restricted to those individuals who are able to keep marital sex within the 'limit', (ὁρος), of 'reproduction' (παιδοποιΐα). Most likely, the Pythagorean source used by Sextus and Clitarchus had to be read in this procreationist sense. Lack of self-control within marriage was thus comparable to adultery (*Clit.* 71 = *Sext.* 233), as both are seen as surrendering to pleasure. In the *Chreiai* of Clitarchus, the unrestrained husband can be said to be committing adultery with his own wife (*Clit.* 71) only within the framework of Pythagoreanism, which considered reproduction to be the only goal of human sexuality and marriage (*Clit.* 70).

⁷⁰ See for example Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 144b and Ps.-Phoc. 186.

⁷¹ Gaca 2000: 132 observes, 'This sexual regulation is Pythagorean and develops from uniquely Pythagorean concerns'; see also Gaca 2003: 99–107.

⁷² On procreationist views on adultery, homosexuality and masturbation, see Gaca 2003: 96–7.

⁷³ See Gaca 2000: 118. On this 'eugenic' understanding of marital sex, see also Brown 1988: 20.

If *Clit.* 70–1 preserve the teaching on sexual morality found in the common source, Sextus' reworking of the Pythagorean material offers valuable insights into his editorial process and his approach to sexual renunciation. As *Clit.* 70–1 constitute a logical unit, it is unlikely that Sextus would have been aware of the sentence now preserved in *Sext.* 231 (= *Clit.* 71) without also being familiar with the tradition of *Clit.* 70. In his epitome, however, Sextus preserved the saying which equates unrestrained marital sex to adultery (*Sext.* 233 = *Clit.* 71), omitting any reference to *Clit.* 70: that is, to the procreationist framework in which sexual intercourse (ἄφροδισία) is allowed. As it now stands, *Sext.* 233 reads as an invitation to asceticism and rejection of sexual desire altogether, whether for reproductive purposes or not, even within marriage.

Together with the plea for celibacy in *Sext.* 230a, the omission of any reference to Pythagorean procreationism shows a shift towards a more ascetic understanding of sexuality, which is characteristic of Sextus' Christian redaction. Some commentators have tried to find parallels to *Sext.* 231 in Graeco-Roman moral philosophy. In his commentary, Walter Wilson observes, 'The promotion of such austere norms for marital sexuality would not have been unusual for the era.'⁷⁴ Likewise, Henry Chadwick sees analogies between *Sext.* 231 and a passage from Plutarch's *Conjugalia praecepta*:

I cannot have the society of the same woman both as wife and as paramour (*Conj. praec.* 142 c).⁷⁵

In spite of the analogies, however, Plutarch is far from promoting marital sexual restraint in the same way conveyed in the *Sentences of Sextus*. Seen in its original context, Plutarch's advice refers to specific cases in which a man's wife is ill disposed towards her husband because she is 'restrained' (σώφρων) and 'austere' (αὔστηρά). Plutarch's instruction is restricted to a spouse who is 'ill tempered' (ἄκρατος) and 'bitter' (ἀνήδυντος) 'by nature' (φύσει).⁷⁶ In all other cases, Plutarch argues that wives should attempt to accustom their husbands to what is respectable 'with pleasure' (μεθ' ἡδονῆς).⁷⁷

As Kathy Gaca has observed, *Sext.* 231 conveys an understanding of what is moral within marriage, which is unprecedented in Hellenistic gnomic sources.⁷⁸ Although Gaca does not mention *Clit.* 71, she is right in stressing the uniqueness of Sextus' ascetic agenda. By hijacking his

⁷⁴ Wilson 2012: 244. A similar idea is found for example in Seneca, *Const. sap.* 7.4.

⁷⁵ Tr. Babbitt 1928; see Chadwick 1959: 173. ⁷⁶ *Conj. praec.* 142b–c. ⁷⁷ *Conj. praec.* 142b.

⁷⁸ Gaca 2003: 260, n. 38.

Pythagorean source material from its conceptual framework, Sextus transfigures the moral tenets of his pagan source into an open condemnation of any display of sexual sentiments. The unrestrained husband of *Sext.* 231 is therefore completely different from that of *Clit.* 71. Sextus includes everybody who engages in sex, without mentioning the Pythagorean doctrines which underlie the original sentence. As Sextus says elsewhere, the marriage of the believers should ultimately 'be a struggle for self-control' (ἀγών ἔστω περὶ ἐγκρατείας).⁷⁹

Since Sextus still contemplates the possibility that Christians could be married, his views cannot be entirely equated to those of the Encratites, who preached complete abstinence from marriage and procreation.⁸⁰ Sextus, however, displays ascetic tendencies which are similar, though less unforgiving, to those of the Encratites. It is noteworthy that Clement of Alexandria in his confutation of the positions of the Encratites in the third book of the *Stromata* appeals specifically to Pythagorean procreationism to persuade Christians of the admissibility of marriage.⁸¹ Clement's reference to Pythagorean procreationism in support of marriage substantiates the suggestion that Sextus may have seen Pythagorean procreationism in his source as a hindrance to his ascetic outlook. At the same time, Clement's use of Pythagorean teachings in fighting Encratism is an indication of the relevance that Pythagorean traditions still had in the debate on asceticism in the second and third century.

Sextus' reworking of his pagan source material does not imply a general rejection of other traditions of the Pythagoreans. As stated above, Sextus sometimes reproduces almost verbatim his gnomic source. This is the case, for example, with *Sext.* 240:

ὥς ἂν γαστρὸς ἄρξης, καὶ ἀφροδισίων ἄρξεις.

As you govern your stomach, you will also govern your sexual desire
(*Sext.* 240).⁸²

Sext. 240 probably belonged to Sextus' gnomic source as it is also preserved in an almost identical form in *Clit.* 73.⁸³ The sentence reflects ancient medical views which linked food intake with an

⁷⁹ *Sext.* 239, tr. Wilson 2012: 240.

⁸⁰ On the Encratites, see for example Brown 1988: 95. See also Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.28.1; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 8.20 and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.29.

⁸¹ See for example 3.3.24.1–2 where Clement seems to praise the continence of the Pythagoreans who, after having generated children, abstain from further sexual practices. On procreationism in Clement, see *Strom.* 3.7.58 and also Dodds 1965: 34, n. 2.

⁸² Tr. Wilson 2012: 241. ⁸³ ἔφ' ὅσον ἂν γαστρὸς ἄρξης, καὶ ἀφροδισίων ἄρξεις, *Clit.* 73.

increased presence of fluids in the body and the production of semen.⁸⁴ Immoderate eating would result in an excess of semen compelling people to be unrestrained in their sexual behaviours.⁸⁵ Pythagoreans followed strict dietary rules.⁸⁶ In the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, mastering one's stomach is presented as a distinctive element of Pythagorean σωφροσύνη ('prudence'), together with the rejection of excessive sleep, sexual lust and anger:

...accustom yourself to be master of the following: first of all, of your stomach, of sleep, of lust and of anger (*Carm. aur.* 9–11).⁸⁷

Pythagorean traditions concerning dietary taboos were believed to derive from the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, following the principle that the souls of the departed could reincarnate in the bodies of animals.⁸⁸ As Gaca has argued, however, the Pythagoreans relied on strict dieting and extensive bodily exercise to exhaust the body and its impulses and be more effective in keeping their sexual activity within the boundaries of reproduction.⁸⁹ In his comment on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, Hierocles sees stomach, sleep, lust and anger as a causal succession so that overeating produces oversleeping which contributes to the production of fluids and leads to sexual desire and bad temper.⁹⁰ According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras slept little and abstained from large meals and wine.⁹¹ The connection between dietary restrictions and the procreationist dictates of the Pythagoreans is defended also by Clement of Alexandria. In *Strom.* 3.3.24, Clement mentions the Pythagorean dietary rule of abstaining from beans.⁹² Clement suggests that Pythagoras had forbidden the consumption of beans not because they cause flatulence or any other explanation provided by ancient authors, but because their consumption was believed to have contraceptive virtues.⁹³ Abstention from beans then ensured that the Pythagoreans would not circumvent the procreationist principle and

⁸⁴ See for example Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 726b. ⁸⁵ See Shaw 1997: 585 and Brown 1988: 17–18.

⁸⁶ See Grant 1980. ⁸⁷ Tr. Thom 1995: 95.

⁸⁸ On abstention from meat among the Pythagoreans as a result of their belief in reincarnation, see Origen, *Cels.* 5.49. See also Kahn 2001: 21–2 and 147 and Grant 1980: 305–6.

⁸⁹ Gaca 2000: 132 observes, 'The procreationist dictate is reinforced by several persuasive strategies. First, persons must diet and exercise to prevent the sexual appetite from being overfed.' See also Burkert 1972: 178, n. 94.

⁹⁰ Hierocles, *In aur. carm.* 8.1; see also Thom 1995: 129. ⁹¹ *Vit. Pyth.* 13.

⁹² In *Vit. phil.* 8.34, Diogenes Laertius says that Aristotle's lost work *On the Pythagoreans* listed the prohibition of eating beans among the *akousmata* of Pythagoras. See Thom 1994: 104 and also Burkert 1972: 72; Grant 1980: 300 and Kahn 2001: 9.

⁹³ On beans being indigestible and producing flatulence, see Apollonius, *Hist. mir.* 46.3.

engage in non-reproductive sexual activity. Unlike Pythagorean procreationism, the Pythagorean belief that dietary abstention would favour sexual restraint did not make any specific allowance for marital intercourse, nor was it incompatible with celibacy. It is probably for this reason that Sextus readily included *Sext.* 240 (= *Clit.* 73) in his selection without any further interpolation.

In a sentence not attested in the pagan witnesses of Sextus' source material, Sextus restates the conviction that gluttony causes sexual immorality:

ἄνθρωπος δις ἐμπιπλῶμενος τροφῇ καὶ μηδέποτε μόνος κοιμῶμενος νύκτωρ συνουσίας οὐ φεύγει.

A person who doubly gorges himself with food and never sleeps alone at night cannot avoid (sexual) couplings (*Sext.* 435).⁹⁴

As Sextus favoured celibacy but did not categorically forbid marriage, the possibility that believers might 'never sleep alone' (μηδέποτε μόνος κοιμῶμενος) could still be contemplated. The Syriac translation of Sextus, however, was probably completed in the fifth or sixth century in a monastic environment. The monks who translated Sextus into Syriac probably found Sextus' suggestion that someone never slept alone to be unsuitable for their intended readership. It is probably for this reason that the Syriac translators adapted the sentence to a monastic context, emending the text so that the maxim would read 'even if he sleeps alone' (Syr. *ܐܝܢ ܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ*). In a manuscript of the Syriac translation, thirteen lines concerning marriage and sexual behaviour are omitted from Sextus' text. Paul de Lagarde, the editor of the Syriac recensions of the *Sentences*, observes that these lines may have been omitted 'a *monacho caelibe*', as instructions concerning marriage would have been of little use for Syrian monks.⁹⁵ These examples of the later reception of the *Sentences of Sextus* in a monastic environment show how Christian ascetics continued to engage in creatively editing material from Sextus' Pythagorean gnostic source to meet the changing needs of Christian ascetic discipline after Sextus' time.

⁹⁴ Tr. Wilson 2012: 412. Wilson 2012: 413 sees here an allusion to Plato, *Ep.* 326b–c.

⁹⁵ It is the ninth-century manuscript Add. 12167 from the British Museum; see de Lagarde 1858: iii.

Conclusion

Scholarship has drawn attention to similarities and communality of themes between early monastic apophthegmatic texts and Graeco-Roman gnostic material used for educational purposes. Having found Pythagorean influences in the *Life of Antony*, Rubenson states, 'We need to ask if there are indications of Neopythagorean traditions within the emerging monastic traditions of Egypt.'⁹⁶ The large diffusion of the *Sentences of Sextus* in monastic communities across the major languages of monastic literature in Late Antiquity provides an important link between early monasticism and Pythagorean sources. The fact that Sextus, the *Pythagorean Sentences* and Porphyry, one of the major players in the rediscovery of Pythagoras in Late Antiquity, share the same source material confirms that early monasticism was influenced to some extent by the same cultural undertaking which initiated the Neopythagorean revival.⁹⁷ The presence of sentences from Sextus' collection among numerous manuscripts from Syrian monasteries and in three monastic rules of the Latin West shows a continuity between the pedagogical gnomologies of the Pythagoreans and the educational production of early monasticism.⁹⁸

The relative success of the *Sentences of Sextus* contributed to the circulation of Pythagorean gnostic traditions in Christian ascetic circles. It is probably because of their similarities to the *Sentences of Sextus* that the Neopythagorean *Pythagorean Sentences* were also translated into Syriac and disseminated in Syrian monasteries.⁹⁹ The Coptic translation of Sextus in codex XII of the Nag Hammadi Library, together with the *Teachings of Silvanus* (NHC VII, 4) and a Coptic translation of Plato's *Resp.* 588a–89b (NHC VI, 5), show the interest of the Nag Hammadi Library in the transmission of philosophical ideas and gnostic popular morality beyond that of Gnostic and Christian texts. Pythagorean material similar in style and content to Sextus' Pythagorean source features also in two fourth-century Christian gnomologies attributed to Evagrius of Pontus and known under the title of *Capita paraenetica* and *Spirituales*

⁹⁶ Rubenson 2013b: 89.

⁹⁷ On the role played by the Neopythagorean revival in early monasticism, see Rubenson 2013b: 79.

⁹⁸ Rubenson 2012: 490 draws attention to the educational purposes of monastic rules.

⁹⁹ The Syriac translation of the *Pythagorean Sentences* is contained in the eighth-century manuscript Add. 14658 of the British Library and has been edited by de Lagarde 1858: 195–201. For an analysis of the relationship between the Syriac versions of Sextus and the Syriac translation of the *Pythagorean Sentences*, see Gildemeister 1870. See also Baumstark 1922: 169–70.

sententiae.¹⁰⁰ Already the fact that Evagrius chose the writing of *sententiae* as his preferred means of instruction shows the impact that Graeco-Roman gnostic educational texts had on his educational principles.¹⁰¹

Rufinus' Latin translation of the *Sentences* was probably instrumental in promoting their use in Western monastic rules, although the collection also found wide distribution as a means of domestic education. Rufinus' dedication of the translation to a couple of wealthy Romans, Apronianus and Avita, as a handbook of ascetic life for their domestic instruction shows the intrinsic educational purposes of the collection.¹⁰² If Pierre-Maurice Bogaert is right in suggesting that Rufinus' translation of Sextus was meant to be circulated together with the *Dicta Catonis*, the educational element in Rufinus' work would be further strengthened.¹⁰³ In Late Antiquity and early medieval times, the *Dicta Catonis* became a staple of Latin literacy, being used in many Western monasteries and schools as an introduction and textbook for the Latin language and grammar.¹⁰⁴

The Christian reworking of Pythagorean material on sexual morality in the *Sentences of Sextus* has shown, however, a twofold tendency. The Christian epitomiser included in his selection any sentence which strengthened his ascetic standpoint, implicitly acknowledging the authority of his pagan source and its suitability to a Christian audience. On the other hand, the adoption of Pythagorean material in the *Sentences* did not imply any slavish or deferential attitude on the part of their author towards his source. In this regard, Chadwick's statement, as mentioned above, that the passage of Pythagorean lore into Christian circles could happen with simple 'adjustments here and there'¹⁰⁵ tends to oversimplify the problem. When the Pythagorean source did not serve his ascetic views, Sextus creatively interpolated, omitted or displaced his material, as shown in his effort to attenuate the procreationist views of his Pythagorean source in favour of a stronger plea for celibacy.

¹⁰⁰ The edition of the Greek text can be found in Elter 1892: xlvii–liv.

¹⁰¹ The Origenist Evagrius would have found references to the *Sentences of Sextus* in Origen's works: see for example Origen, *Cels.* 8.30 and *Comm. Matt.* 15.3. On Evagrius' use of *sententiae*, see also Rubenson 2012: 501–2 and Larsen 2013a.

¹⁰² Cooper 1996: 105 stresses the need of wealthy households in Late Antiquity for educational and devotional literature aimed at promoting asceticism. On the relationship between early monasticism in the Latin-speaking world and the Roman upper class, see for example Rubenson 2012: 491 and Dahlman in this volume.

¹⁰³ See Bogaert 1972.

¹⁰⁴ On the use of the *Dicta Catonis* in teaching Latin in medieval times, see Reynolds 1996: 10–11 and Copeland 2001: 22 and 79.

¹⁰⁵ Chadwick 1959: 160.

According to Roland Smith's reconstruction, the portraits of Pythagoras and other famous Greek philosophers placed in the philosophical school of Aphrodisias were defaced some time in the mid-sixth century by an angry mob of Christians after the Christian Emperor Justinian had forbidden pagan teachers from teaching.¹⁰⁶ At the beginning of the fifth century, Jerome's false allegation that Sextus was a 'Pythagorean' and 'a heathen without Christ' (Lat. *hominis absque Christo atque ethnici*)¹⁰⁷ was perhaps instrumental in the progressive disappearance of the *Sentences* from the Greek monasteries of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In the sixth century, the *Decretum Gelasianum* condemned the *Sentences* as a heretical work.¹⁰⁸ The reception of the second-century *Sentences of Sextus* in monastic works of the East and the West, however, remains an important example of the early monastic tendency to perceive a fluidity of borders between monastic ascetic discipline and the philosophical life,¹⁰⁹ and a continuity of the educational and pedagogical tools and purposes of the latter in the former.

¹⁰⁶ Smith 1990: 155. ¹⁰⁷ *Ep.* 133.3. ¹⁰⁸ *Dec. Gel.* 5.291–2.

¹⁰⁹ On monastic life as a philosophical life, see for example Rubenson 2013b: 89–90 and Westergren and Rydell Johnsen in this volume.

PART V



Manuscript and Literary Production

13 | Textual Fluidity and Authorial Revision

The Case of Cassian and Palladius

BRITT DAHLMAN

Among scholars a 'fluid' text has often been regarded as corrupt. However, the idea of a stable text is anachronistic.¹ In fact, the problem with many critical editions is that they present a text as being stable when it is not. Traditionally editors have attempted to reconstruct an 'original' text preserved in multiple redactions by mixing different readings together. Rather than producing a pure and stable text, however, this results in contamination and the creation of a compilation of readings from various textual traditions.

Among scholars, it is common knowledge that monastic works often survive in a variety of redactions and versions in all the various languages of Christianity. However, it is rarely noted that the textual traditions of many Classical works are fluid, as well. Just as today writers (and teachers) constantly revise their works, so did ancient authors. Revisions could have been made by the author to correct errors in his or her draft or to make changes for stylistic, dogmatic, ethical or other reasons. Additional revisions might be made by other individuals for similar reasons, or to adapt texts to new settings: geographical, cultural, social and pedagogical.

When a work had entered the public domain, it was very hard for the author to control its circulation. Essentially the only way for an author to revise the initial text of a work already disseminated was to release a new 'edition' of the work. Therefore, several versions of the same work, all stemming from the same author, could be available simultaneously. Naturally, in the copying process this could lead to cross-pollinization. Thus, when readings differ in the preserved text witnesses, the reason could of course be modification by others, but the readings could just as well go back to the original author. In either case, texts written for a specific audience might later be revised or rewritten again to suit a different audience or to serve alternate purposes. As cultural practices and settings changed so did the tradition and the literatures connected to them.

¹ Bryant 2007: 18.

It is hardly unexpected that texts used in a monastic milieu might be revised and rewritten to fit new conditions. What is perhaps more surprising is the degree to which the educational strategies used in monastic revision match the practice seen in a broader range of authors. As has been repeatedly emphasized in ongoing work on monastic school traditions, ancient pedagogical practice promoted the ability to reshape and reformulate a text to ‘aptly’ address a new historical circumstance, moment, or setting.² Although emphasis has long been placed on differentiating between Classical and monastic educational models, common forms link practice that appears central to both settings.³

As demonstrated in a number of contributions included here, monastic authors, like their Classical and Graeco-Roman counterparts, were trained to write according to a set structure of rhetorical strategies.⁴ The educational setting of early monasticism suggested in this volume is probably a major reason for such similarity in practice.

Such fluid pedagogical practice suggests that instead of searching for and trying to reconstruct a hypothetical ‘original’ text and viewing all deviations as corruptions, it is as important to study the varieties of redactions, versions and compilations in their own right.⁵ This ‘new’ philological approach to texts reminds readers and scholars that revisionary shifts also preserve the voice of an ancient author. As such, it pleads a case for assigning equal weight to the many texts preserved in various versions and redactions.⁶

² Larsen 2008. See also Hock and O’Neil 1986.

³ In ongoing research, Lillian Larsen has emphasized the degree to which monastic literary forms align with the ancient school curriculum. Here training in grammar and rhetoric involved ongoing work with maxims, sentences, sayings and stories in a series of ‘elementary exercises’ (*progymnasmata*). Routine practice included textual and narrative manipulation using strategies such as ‘expansion’ (*epekteinôsis*) and ‘condensation’ (*sustolê*). Monastic literature has traditionally been studied separately from the pagan rhetorical and philosophical context. However, Larsen’s research has pointed out the significance of education and training in the early Eastern monastic tradition and the role played by monastic *apophthegmata* as part of a larger tradition of literary antecedents. Larsen has demonstrated the importance of studying monastic narrative traditions in relation to ancient educational methods and the rhetorical tradition; see for example Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2008 and 2013a. Larsen’s research results are summarized in Rubenson 2012 and 2013a. For further references, see Dahlman 2013: 23, n. 1.

⁴ See for example the contributions by Ellen Muehlberger and Mark Sheridan in this volume.

⁵ See Larsen 2001, 2006a, 2006b.

⁶ The term and concept of ‘New Philology’ was introduced in 1990 in a special issue of the journal *Speculum* (Nichols 1990). In the context of early Egyptian monastic literature, the project NEWCONT (New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt), administered by Hugo Lundhaug at the University of Oslo, Norway, employs a methodology inspired by this concept; see Lied and Lundhaug (2017). See also Lundhaug and Jenott in this volume.

In this contribution I will discuss some examples of revisions of various kinds and the possible reasons behind them. In particular, the authorial voices of these revisions will be considered. After examining evidence for revision across a range of non-monastic and monastic source material, special attention will be given to the writings of John Cassian and Palladius of Helenopolis. The former, Cassian, is significant because his two most-known works, the *Institutiones* and the *Collationes*, are preserved in a Greek version that gives rise to many questions on authorial revision; the latter, Palladius, because his *Historia Lausiaca* has likewise been preserved in multiple redactions and versions. Here a number of stories that differ considerably from the ‘standard’ edited text will be studied. (These are found in a monastic collection called *Collectio Scorialensis parua*.) The writings of both Cassian and Palladius are also closely connected to a broader range of still more fluid monastic collections of *apophthegmata*. The aim of exploring these bodies of text is not only to learn more about strategies of revision, but also to gain further insight into the pedagogical approaches that link monastic practice with its counterparts in broader settings.⁷

Rewriting as Authorial Revision

In one of his letters to Atticus, Cicero says that, by mistake, he has mentioned the name of Lucius Corfidius in his speech for the defence of Ligarius.⁸ The text was already copied and spread. What to do? Cicero asked Atticus to get the name erased from all copies with the help of three named correctors: Pharnaces, Antaeus and Salvius. Today, in the preserved text witnesses of the speech *Pro Ligario*, the name is still there.⁹

In another letter, Cicero relates that in his book *Orator*, he has confused the two Greek comedy writers Aristophanes and Eupolis. He says to Atticus, ‘I shall be still better pleased if you will get your clerks to substitute Aristophanes for Eupolis both in your own copies and in other people’s.’¹⁰ In this case the correction must have been

⁷ See Larsen 2006b, 2013a. See also Stefaniw in this volume.

⁸ Cicero, *Ad Att.* 13.44.3 (336) (Shackleton Bailey 1966).

⁹ Cicero, *Pro Ligario* 11.33 (Clark 1918).

¹⁰ Cicero, *Ad Att.* 12.6a.1 (243): *erit gratius si non modo in tuis libris sed etiam in aliorum per librarios tuos Aristophanem reposueris pro Eupoli*. (Translation by Shackleton Bailey 1966.)

successful, since all preserved text witnesses of the *Orator* read Aristophanes.¹¹

These are examples of how a well-known ancient author, Cicero, tried to control the text and distribution of his books. He simply wanted to make corrections of his own mistakes. However, we know from several other authors' own statements that they made much more thorough revisions and rewritten versions of their works.¹²

One known reason was because the work had been copied by others against the author's will when still unfinished, forcing the author to release a new edition in the hope that it would supersede the other/earlier one(s). For example Tertullian, in his treatise *Adversus Marcionem*, says that the present text is the third edition. He notes that the first one was 'too hurriedly composed', and he had it 'superseded by a fuller treatise'. Then he reports:

Hanc quoque nondum exemplariis suffectam fraude tunc fratris, dehinc apostatati, amisi, qui forte descripserat quaedam mendosissime et exhibuit frequentiae. Emendationis necessitas facta est. Innouationis eius occasio aliquid adicere persuasit.

This also, before enough copies had been made, was stolen from me by a person, at that time a Christian but afterwards an apostate, who chanced to have copied out some extracts very incorrectly, and shewed them to a group of people. Hence the need for correction. The opportunity provided by this revision has moved me to make some additions.¹³

In a later example, Anselm of Canterbury begins his work *Cur Deus Homo* with the statement:

Opus subditum propter quosdam qui, antequam perfectum et exquisitum esset, primas partes eius me nesciente sibi transcribebant, festinantius quam mihi opportunum esset, ac ideo breuius quam uellem sum coactus, ut potui, consummare.

¹¹ Cicero, *Orator* 29 (Westman 1980).

¹² Gurd 2007: 50, n. 5, following Bryant 2002: 101–11, speaks of works going through 'three distinct phases of revision: (1) a phase of "authorial revision," in which the author reads and corrects his own drafts; (2) a phase of "editorial revision," in which the text is submitted to the judgment of other readers, whose advice the author welcomes; and (3) a final phase of "cultural revision," in which the work, now beyond the control of the author, is appropriated and reformed in adumbrations, imitations, and re-inscriptions.' However, both of the two first phases involve the author and would be hard to differentiate: both of them are "authorial revision". For a definition of rewriting versus textual fluidity, see Czachesz 2010: 425.

¹³ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.1.1–2; text and translation by Evans 1972.

There are certain men who without my knowledge copied for themselves the first parts of the enclosed work before it was completed and perfected. Because of these individuals I have been forced to finish this treatise as best I could and more hastily than suited me, and hence in a more abbreviated form than I had intended.¹⁴

That new contexts created a need for revisions is also seen in Basil's *Asketikon*, which comprises a series of his responses to questions asked by ascetics in the local communities. The work is known for its two principal stages: *Small Asketikon* or *Shorter Rule*, and *Great Asketikon* or *Longer Rule*. However, in fact many redactions and versions are preserved. In a detailed study of *Asketikon*, Anna Silvas states, 'the work was augmented and re-arranged gradually over the years, usually by way of response to living situations and particular occasions'.¹⁵ As an example of such an occasion Silvas mentions the consequences of the great famine in Pontus in 368–369. Abandoned children were taken care of by the community, and as a result Basil enlarged *Longer Rule* 15 by including a section on the training of orphans in the community.¹⁶

That Basil made constant revisions and enlargements of his work is not shown primarily through statements by the author himself but thanks to editorial notes by a scholiast, whose scholia date from some time between the late fifth to the sixth centuries. Of particular interest is Scholion 5, which states:

There are occasions when the very text itself in the volume from Caesarea differs from that of the manuscript brought from Pontos, as is the case here. The reason for this is, I think, that the great teacher was questioned at one time by some monks [e.g. in Cappadocia], at another time by others [e.g. in Pontos], but they were living in different places; so he took up his own copy and amended it as he thought fit, and so handed it over to be transcribed, to each [body] of those who were questioning him.¹⁷

Silvas thoughtfully comments on the scholion: 'there is a difference not only in the arrangement or order of the material, but also in Basil's reported speech or text. This is important evidence and indicates caution in attributing to the insertion of a later editor what may well have come from Basil himself in addressing different contexts.'¹⁸

¹⁴ Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* praef. (Schmitt 1970); translation by Hopkins and Richardson 2000. I am grateful to Jason Zaborowski for directing my attention to the work of Anselm.

¹⁵ Silvas 2005: 2.

¹⁶ See Giorda 2017. For further discussion of Basil's pedagogical protocol, see Larsen 2013a: 63.

¹⁷ Translation by Silvas 2005: 6. ¹⁸ Silvas 2005: 6, n. 8.

Another common reason for revision was stylistic. Sometimes a rewritten work was redirected to an audience on another social level. Such reworkings might raise the stylistic level or lower it.¹⁹ For the latter, we have an example in John of Damascus' second *Apologetic speech against those who attack the divine images*. In fact, three speeches, which are consecutive reworkings of the same topic, are preserved and available for comparison. The second speech is slightly shorter and a simplified, but still very similar, version of the first. John felt obliged to explain why he had written a second speech in a more simple style. He tells us that it was written because some 'children of the church' had suggested that the first had been 'not very easily comprehended by the many'.²⁰ However, when comparing the first and second speeches, the stylistic differences are minor: the changes deal mainly with the contents. It appears that John expected the audience, probably comprised of monks and lower clergy, not to have a problem with the style but rather with the content.²¹

Translating as Authorial Revision

Some ancient authors not only revised their works, but also translated them into another language. One example is Josephus. In the preface to his *The Jewish War*, Josephus states:

προυθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν, Ἑλλάδι γλώσση μεταβαλὼν ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον, ἀφηγήσασθαι.

I propose to provide the subjects of the Roman Empire with a narrative of the facts, by translating into Greek the account which I previously composed in my vernacular tongue and sent to the barbarians in the interior.²²

Josephus first wrote a version in his native tongue, most likely Aramaic. This Aramaic version is lost, but the Greek must be considerably reworked, since there are no traces of a Semitic original. From other statements in the works by Josephus, we learn that he constantly improved his drafts. He had a long correspondence with King Agrippa, who according to one letter

¹⁹ See the classic papers by Ševčenko 1981 and 1982.

²⁰ Johannes Damascenus, *Contra imaginum calumniatores oratio* 2.1, in Kotter 1975: 69, 26–9.

²¹ Ševčenko 1982: 234–6, Ad. n. 13.

²² Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 1.3 (Thackeray 1927); translation by Thackeray.

gave him oral information as well.²³ Josephus also received help from assistants to improve his Greek.²⁴

Turning to Christian writers we know that Tertullian wrote several works in Greek, now all lost, and then reworked them to Latin. From statements in two Latin works, it is implied that they were preceded by earlier Greek versions. In *De baptismo* 15, Tertullian says: *sed de isto plenius iam nobis in Graeco digestum est* ('But this matter has already been dealt with more fully by us in Greek').²⁵ The *De uirginibus uelandis* Tertullian begins by saying: *Proprium iam negotium passus meae opinionis Latine quoque ostendam uirgines nostras uelari oportere* ('Having already struggled with my own opinion, I will show in Latin also that it is necessary for our virgins to be veiled . . .').²⁶ Then in a third work, *De corona militis*, Tertullian refers to another work, *De spectaculis*, which he had written in both Greek and Latin: *Sed et huic materiae propter sua uiludios nostros Graeco quoque stilo satis fecimus* ('But with this subject we have, for the sake of our own play-lovers, sufficiently dealt in Greek also').²⁷ Timothy Barnes argues that Tertullian's Greek works were intended only for the people of Carthage and not for a wider Eastern audience, since the subjects dealt with are homiletic (baptism, veiling of virgins and games).²⁸

There are of course many other cases where there are fewer clear ancient statements and/or less evidence of authorial revisions, but where modern scholars have suggested that the author could have revised or rewritten his (or her) work.²⁹ However, in many cases, these suggestions have been questioned by other scholars. In the following I will discuss two monastic authors, John Cassian and Palladius, whose writings and authorship have been subject to scholarly debate.

²³ Josephus, *Vita* 366 (Thackeray 1926). ²⁴ Josephus, *Contr. Ap.* 1.50 (Thackeray 1926).

²⁵ Tertullian, *De bapt.* 15 (Evans 1964); my translation. Fragments of this Greek version have been identified in the work *De Trinitate* by Didymus the Blind; see Bardy 1910: 234–5. For a discussion of Didymus' pedagogical strategies, see Stefaniw, this volume.

²⁶ Tertullian, *De uirg. uel.* 1.1 (Schulz-Flügel 1997); my translation.

²⁷ Tertullian, *De cor. mil.* 6.3 (Fontaine 1966); my translation. ²⁸ Barnes 1985: 253.

²⁹ One of the most famous examples might be the Western text of the *Acts of the Apostles*. Many scholars have presented theories explaining the relationship between the Alexandrian and the Western text forms. Some believe that both forms were produced by the author Luke, and that one of them, usually the longer Western text, was a later revision. However, with the discovery of new text witnesses, it has become clear that there are text forms that fall between the two. Barbara Aland traces several stages in the development of the Western text and comes to the conclusion that it is a third-century product: see Aland 1985. There is not one stable Western text, but several texts.

The Case of Cassian

Regarding most other Christian and monastic writers, we have few clear cases indicating works translated into another language by the author himself. However, the works of John Cassian offer an interesting case study. As such, I would like to discuss some problematic issues connected with his authorship.

Until recently, scholars regarded Cassian as an exclusively Latin writer, and the preserved Greek text as a translation from the Latin. However, this view has now been challenged by Panayiotis Tzamalikos. In 2012 he published two volumes on Cassian the Roman – which is what he is called in Greek.³⁰ One contains a new edition of the Greek text.³¹ In Greek, three works by Cassian exist, all taking the form of letters:

- 1) Πρὸς Κάστορα ἐπίσκοπον περὶ διατυπώσεως καὶ κανόνων τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολὴν καὶ Αἴγυπτον κοινοβίων ('To Bishop Castor: On the Rules and Regulations of the Coenobia in the East and Egypt'). It corresponds to the Latin *Institutiones*, chapters I–IV;
- 2) Περὶ τῶν ἡ' λογισμῶν (On the Eight Considerations [of Evil]). It corresponds to *Institutiones* V–VII;
- 3) Πρὸς Λεόντιον ἡγούμενον περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Σκῆτιν ἁγίων πατέρων ('To *Higoumen* Leontius: On the Holy Fathers at Scetis'). It corresponds to *Collationes* I–II and VII–VIII (in Greek *Coll.* VII is a chapter entitled Συνεισφορά τοῦ ἀββᾶ Σερήνου πρώτη ['First Contribution by Abba Serenus'] and *Coll.* VIII a chapter entitled Συνεισφορά τοῦ ἀββᾶ Σερήνου περὶ τῆς παναρέτου ['Contribution by Abba Serenus on the Panaretus [Wisdom]']).

³⁰ With respect to the Greek manuscript tradition, the seminal work of Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana, Università di Bologna, predates this publication. We eagerly await her forthcoming publication.

³¹ Tzamalikos 2012a and 2012b. Previously the Greek version of the *Collationes* (and a small portion of the *Institutiones*) was edited from the same Greek MS Meteora 573 in Duobouniotes 1913. The Greek version of the *Institutiones* was transmitted in some MSS under the name of Athanasius of Alexandria, and published as *Epistulae I–II ad Castorem*, in PG 28: 849–905. There is also an edition of the Greek version of *Inst.* I–IV of a Vienna MS published in Wotke 1898–1899. However, already in the eighteenth century Makarios of Corinth and Nikodemus the Hagiorite included the Greek versions of *Inst.* V–XII and *Coll.* I–II in their work *Philokalia*, which was first published in Venice in 1782. The following year (1783) they anonymously published the large collection of monastic texts compiled by Paul, founder of the Theotokos Evergetis monastery in Constantinople, known as *Synagoge* or *Evergetinon*. It contains excerpts from the Greek Cassian. The Latin version refers to the editions by Guy 1965 and Pichery 1955–1959.

Tzamalikos calls into question Cassian's authorship of the Latin version of the *Institutiones* (which in Greek are two separate works) and *Collationes*, said to be written in the fourth and fifth centuries (c. 360–435). Instead he identifies the author as Cassian the Sabaite, a sixth-century monk, native of Scythopolis, who is mentioned by Cyril of Scythopolis. Tzamalikos suggests that this Cassian wrote in Greek and the Latin texts are later translations full of interpolations and falsely attributed to the Cassian of fifth-century Gaul. This proposed identification raises new questions, and invites closer investigation of the relation between the Latin and the Greek versions, which is something Tzamalikos does not do in his studies.

While a full analysis would take us beyond the limits of this contribution, some observations are in order. One way of facing the challenging questions of dating and primacy is to look at Cassian's *apophthegmata*. There are excerpts from Cassian's writings already in the earliest alphabetical collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*AP/alph. uetus*), dated to the end of the fifth century. According to Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana, this collection is represented in three Greek manuscripts: Vat. gr. 2592, Par. gr. 1596 and Venet. Marc. gr. II 70.³² In Vat. gr. 2592 (f. 66vb), the ten *apophthegmata* attributed to Cassian are preceded by the title Ἐκ τῶν λόγων τοῦ ἁββᾶ Κασσιανοῦ τοῦ Ῥωμαίου ἐπιλογαί ('Selections from the words by Abba Cassian the Roman'). The same *apophthegmata* are also found in the old Latin systematical collection (*PJ*). This was translated from the Greek by Pelagius (who later became Pope of Rome, d. 561) and John in the mid-sixth century.³³ The *apophthegmata* correspond to the following:³⁴

The *apophthegmata* excerpted from the *Collationes* (except for that from book XVIII, which does not exist in Greek) follow the language of the Greek version edited by Tzamalikos almost verbatim. The excerpts from the *Institutiones*, however, seem to be translated into Greek from

³² Faraggiana di Sarzana 1993 and 1997: 455–60. Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana is preparing an edition of the *AP/alph. uetus*. Faraggiana's work on the manuscript tradition of the *AP* is foundational to further study of the source material.

³³ A Greek version of the oldest systematical collection (stage a, *AP/syst. uetus*) is preserved in cod. Par. gr. 2474; see Guy 1984: 188–90. Unfortunately this manuscript is lacunose, e.g. missing ch. 8 (except for the first *apophthegma*) to the middle of ch. 15. Guy's edition of the systematical collection (*GS*) is based on manuscripts from later stages of the textual tradition.

³⁴ Abbreviations used: *G* = *Apophthegmata Patrum*; *Collectio Graeca Alphabetica*, in Cotelier 1677; *PJ* = *Apophthegmata Patrum*; *Collectio Latina Systematica interpretibus Pelagio, Iohanne et anonymo*, in Rosweyde 1615; *GS* = *Apophthegmata Patrum*; *Collectio Graeca Systematica*, in Guy 1993–2005.

Table 1

<i>Ap/alph.</i> <i>uetus</i> (Vat. gr. 2592)	<i>AP/G</i>	<i>AP/PJ</i>	<i>AP/GS</i>	Cass. lat.	Cass. graec. (page and line in Tzamalikos 2012a)
1	Cassianus 1	XIII.2	XIII.2	<i>Inst.</i> V.24	
2	Cassianus 3	XIII.3	XIII.3	<i>Inst.</i> V.25	
3a	Cassianus 4	IV.24	IV.26	<i>Inst.</i> V.27	
3b	Cassianus 5	I.10	I.15	<i>Inst.</i> V.28	
4	Cassianus 6a	XI.18a	XI.48a	<i>Inst.</i> V.29	
5	Cassianus 6b	XI.18b	XI.48b	<i>Inst.</i> V.31	
6		V.3	V.4a	<i>Coll.</i> II.13.1–2	200,4–9
7		V.4	V.4b	<i>Coll.</i> II.13.4–10	200,10–204,18
8	Cassianus 7	VI.10	VI.14	<i>Inst.</i> VII.19	108,8–11
9	Serapion 4	VIII.9	VIII.12	<i>Coll.</i> XVIII.11	
10	Poemen 101b	IV.25	IV.27	<i>Coll.</i> II.103b–11.5a	194,18–196,21

the Latin, as was observed by Fr Diekamp.³⁵ Only one of these is also found in the Greek version: G Cassianus 7. Here the versions can be compared.

Philip Rousseau devoted an article to Cassian’s *apophthegmata*. However, he did not discuss them in depth in relation to the Greek version of Cassian’s works.³⁶ One problem he addresses is the saying in G Cassianus 7. The word συγκλητικός meaning ‘senator’ is wrongly interpreted as the name Syncletius in *Inst.* VII.19. However, G Cassianus 7 and GS VI.14 have συγκλητικός τις, translated by Rousseau as ‘a man of senatorial rank/a certain senator’ – a reading that would be primary to Cassian’s *quendam prolata Syncletium* (‘a certain Syncletius’). How could Cassian have misunderstood this? Rousseau suggests that Cassian may have picked up (and in this case mistranslated) independent apophthegmatic traditions.

Turning to the Greek version, we suggest an alternate solution. It actually says ‘a certain senator’, τινὰ συγκλητικόν.³⁷ However, in *AP/alph. uetus*, Vat. gr. 2592, this saying has Συγκλητικός τις ὀνόματι (‘a certain man named Syncleticus’), as in the oldest systematical collections, both the Greek *AP/syst. uetus*, Par. gr. 2474, and the Latin *PJ* VI.10 (PL 73, 890 C): *Syncleticus aliquis nomine*. Thus, the reading of the earliest *AP* collections

³⁵ Diekamp 1900: 353–4. See also Guran 2003: 241. ³⁶ Rousseau 2005–2006.
³⁷ Tzamalikos 2012a: 108.8–11.

Table 2

<i>AP/alph. uetus</i> (Vat. gr. 2592) Cassianus 8	Εἶπε πάλιν, ὅτι <u>Συγκλητικός τις ὀνόματι</u> ἀποταξάμενος
<i>AP/G</i> Cassianus 7	Εἶπε πάλιν, ὅτι <u>Συγκλητικός τις</u> ἀποταξάμενος
<i>AP/syst. uetus</i> (Par. gr. 2474, f. 59r.2–13) VI.12	Εἶπεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Κασσιανὸς ὅτι <u>Συγκλητικός τις ὀνόματι</u> ἀποταξάμενος
<i>AP/GS</i> VI.14	Εἶπεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Κασσιανὸς ὅτι <u>συγκλητικός τις</u> ἀποταξάμενος
<i>AP/PJ</i> VI.10	Dixit abbas Cassianus quia <u>Syncreticus aliquis</u> <u>nomine</u> renuntiasset saeculo
Cass. lat. <i>Inst.</i> VII.19	Fertur sententia sancti Basilii Caesariensis episcopi ad <u>quendam prolata Syncretium</u> tali quo diximus tepore torpentem. Qui cum se renuntiasset diceret huic mundo
Cass. graec. Tzamalikos 2012a, p. 108.8–11	Καλὸν δὲ καὶ ἐνταῦθα καὶ λόγου ἁγίων πατέρων μνησθῆναι. Φέρεται τοίνυν τοῦ ἁγίου Βασιλείου ἐπισκόπου Καισαρείας λόγος πρὸς <u>τινα</u> <u>συγκλητικὸν</u> χλιαρῶς ἀποταξάμενον

coincides with that of the Latin *Inst.* VII.19. The word ὀνόματι ('named') has been omitted from the later stages of the alphabetical and systematical collections (G and GS).³⁸

The reading ('a certain senator') of the Greek version is primary, which offers strong support for the Greek text's priority over the Latin. Generally, the Latin *Institutiones* have a higher literary stylistic level and many metaphrastic additions. Although scholars (with the exception of Tzamalikos) have not doubted the priority of the Latin text, a few have questioned the originality of the preserved Latin version. Owen Chadwick claimed that the first Latin version of Cassian's works had been interpolated and tampered with; it did not look like the one that is preserved today.³⁹ Concerning *Inst.* III (a book that is completely absent in the Greek version), by making a stylometric analysis Richard Goodrich has confirmed that certain sections are in fact unlikely to have been written by the same author as the rest of the work, viz. Cassian.⁴⁰

³⁸ Diekamp (1900: 354) points out another indication of dependence between the *apophthegma* and the Latin versus the Greek version (which he calls the 'Epitome'): 'An eine Abhängigkeit der *Apophthegmata* von der Epitome ist wegen der aus Cassian stammenden, aber nicht in der Epitome stehenden Bemerkung μὴ βουλόμενος κτλ nicht zu denken.'

³⁹ Chadwick 1968: 41–50, 76–7. ⁴⁰ Goodrich 2007: 235–73 (Appendix 2).

The fact that the *apophthegmata* excerpts from the *Institutiones* are translated into Greek from the Latin implies that already in the fifth century there were three versions of the *Institutiones*: the Greek, which is very likely the oldest; a Latin version, which must have been created very soon after the Greek one; and then the Greek passages of the *AP* translated from the Latin. It is hard to know if the latter were translated for an *AP* collection or if excerpts were taken from an already existing, now lost, translation.⁴¹

Turning to the *Collationes* I would like to mention an example discussed by Hans-Oskar Weber. He compares the Latin text of *Coll.* II.13 with an *apophthegma* in the Latin systematical collection: *PJ* V.4 (PL 73, 874B–875 C). Weber came to the conclusion that the *apophthegma* is primary and that Cassian must have used it as his *Vorlage*, even if perhaps not in this written form. According to Weber, Cassian ‘expands and embellishes’ this source, and ‘alters the scopus for his own purposes.’⁴²

The *apophthegma* in question is found in the *AP/alph. uetus* (no. 7 in Table 1) and in the Greek systematical collection: *GS* V.4b. What Weber did not realize is that it agrees almost verbatim with the Greek version of the *Collationes*.⁴³ Likewise, the Greek version of Cassian’s writings has the same characteristics in general as implied by Weber. They are shorter, less adorned, yet very coherent. In general, the Latin version has more Bible quotations than the Greek. The *apophthegma* discussed by Weber (*PJ* V.4/ *GS* V.4b) lacks several of the Bible quotations found in the correspondent Latin text. One can argue that it is more likely that they are added than omitted, giving the impression that the Greek is a more concise and less elaborated version.

Another example of this is found in the beginning of the work. In the first preface to the Latin *Collationes*, Cassian mentions that Bishop Castor, who commissioned the work, has died. Therefore he now dedicates his new work – the ten conferences – to two new patrons, Pope Leontius and

⁴¹ Gennadius, *De uir. ill.* 64, refers to an epitome of Cassian’s works attributed to Eucherius of Lyon. Scholars have regarded the Greek version as its translation. However, Diekamp convincingly demonstrated that the epitome is lost. He recognized the differences between the texts and the dependence between the *apophthegma AP/G* Cassianus 7 and the Latin version (see n. 25), but curiously enough thought that both the Greek version (as edited in *PG* 28 and by Wotke) and the *apophthegmata* excerpts were abridgements of one now lost Greek translation made in the fifth century containing the full text of both the *Institutiones* and the *Collationes* (Diekamp 1900: 354).

⁴² Weber 1960: 35: ‘Er erweitert und schmückt aus, er verändert den Skopus für seine Zwecke.’

⁴³ Tzamalikos 2012a: 200.10–204.18.

Brother Helladius: *uobis potissimum, o beatissime papa Leonti et sancte frater Helladi, credidi consecrandas* ('[these Conferences] I have thought good to dedicate to you in particular, O blessed Pope, Leontius, and holy Brother Helladius').

The Greek version, in turn, is presented as a letter dedicated to *hegoumenos* Leontius. In the short introduction there is no mention of Helladius.⁴⁴ If it is translated from the now existing Latin version, why would a translator omit the name of Helladius? He is presented as a positive example of a monk who adopted the way of life of the Desert Fathers. An intentional omission due to *damnatio memoriae* is hard to fathom, especially since it is indicated in the second preface that Helladius had been ordained bishop. It is more likely that his name has been added in a reworked Latin version. The Greek version seems indeed to be primary.

However, there are some signs of a Latin *Vorlage* of the *Collationes* as well. In the Greek *Contribution by Abba Serenus on the Panaretus [Wisdom]*, that corresponds to the Latin *Coll. VIII.10.1*, there is a Bible quotation from Genesis:

λέγει γάρ· ὁ δὲ ὄφης ἦν φρονιμώτατος πάντων τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπερ ὁ Ἑβραῖος ἐκδίδωσι, ὁ δὲ ὄφης ἦν σκληρότερος πάντων τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

For it says: *And the serpent was the most wise among all the beasts of the earth.* Which the Hebrew editor renders, *And the serpent was more cruel than all the beasts of the earth.*⁴⁵

Cassian quotes the Septuagint text of Gen. 3:1: ὁ δὲ ὄφης ἦν φρονιμώτατος πάντων τῶν θηρίων... ('the serpent was the most wise among all the beasts'). But then he says, 'Which the Hebrew editor renders', and repeats the same sentence except that he now says that the serpent was σκληρότερος ('more cruel'). One might wonder why he does this. No known other translator has σκληρότερος. Aquila and Theodotion have πανούργος ('crafty'), Symmachus has πανουργότερος ('more crafty'). Is Cassian referring to an unknown translator from the Hebrew?

If we look at the Latin text of *Coll. VIII.10.1*, Cassian's revisionary choices make more sense: *Serpens autem erat sapientior*, siue, ut Hebraici exprimunt libri, *callidior cunctis bestiis terrae quas fecit Dominus Deus*. First he says that the serpent was wiser, *sapientior*, which must be his own

⁴⁴ Tzamalikos 2012a: 168.

⁴⁵ Tzamalikos 2012a: 320.20–2; my modification of Tzamalikos' translation.

translation from the Septuagint. Then he says ‘or as the Hebrew copies express it’, and quotes the rest of the verse now using the word *callidior* (‘more crafty’). The latter is also what we find in the *Vulgate*, Jerome’s translation from the Hebrew.⁴⁶

In an even more revealing example, Tzamalikos observes that the Greek manuscripts have a strange word that makes no sense: ὁχερήμω.⁴⁷ However, if one looks at the corresponding Latin text of *Coll.* II.5.1, it states: *hac eremo* (‘this desert’). In ancient times the two terms would have been written in *scriptio continua*, as one word. This suggests an origin of the Greek misinterpretation.

Is the reason why the Greek *Collationes* consist only of books I–II and VII–VIII was that they had a Latin *Vorlage* which did not survive? An early Latin draft (of at least parts of the *Collationes*) might have been produced by Cassian himself. This presumed ‘incomplete’ Latin version may have come into circulation and been translated into Greek, possibly against Cassian’s own wishes. Cassian may have constantly revised and enlarged his Latin work. Later on it could have been further revised by others, presumably a disciple of his or his heirs. Even if Cassian originally wrote the *Collationes* in Latin, the Greek version is very important, since it seems to represent an earlier stage in the work’s evolution than the existing Latin text (as edited by Pichery 1955–1959).

Overall, these examples suggest that there is little reason to doubt the existence of a Cassian the Roman living around 360 to 435, since some of the oldest *AP* collections (both the *alph.* and *syst. uetus*) contain excerpts from the writings of Cassian. The excerpts from the *Institutiones* are translated from the Latin, those from the *Collationes* are taken from the Greek. This suggests that several versions in both Greek and Latin existed already at the end of the fifth century. Concerning the Greek works that correspond to the Latin *Institutiones*, there is no clear sign of a Latin *Vorlage*. It seems likely that Cassian wrote them in Greek, but this raises the question of whether they were translated into Latin by Cassian himself or by someone else (perhaps a disciple?). In either case, today’s Latin version has been interpolated and reworked by others. The Greek version of the *Collationes* had a Latin *Vorlage*, but it seems to represent an earlier stage of the text than the preserved Latin version. Did Cassian write all the preserved Latin books? To what degree might they reflect Cassian’s own

⁴⁶ Similar expressions referring to the Hebrew in the form of Jerome’s translation occur in *Inst.* XII.31 and *Coll.* XXIII.8.2 (which are not found in the Greek): see Stewart 1995: 15 with n. 87.

⁴⁷ Tzamalikos 2012a: 186.17. The word actually reoccurs some lines below: see Duobouniotes 1913: 64, ns. 18 and 20.

revisions? These complex questions concerning the authorship of Cassian's writings remind us of how much research still remains to be done.⁴⁸

Regardless of the language used, the works are written in a high literary style full of rhetorical figures. The monastic writer(s) is a bilingual author, well trained in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy and theology. The revisions included in them demonstrate a constant rhetorical refinement of the texts. Rebecca Krawiec suggests that Cassian created a new monastic reading culture, where the *Institutiones* functioned as a monastic handbook equivalent to its secular rhetorical counterparts. She calls the *Collationes* a work of theory that, in turn, presents models for the monks.⁴⁹ Within this frame, continuous revision forms an essential part of the pedagogical formation of the ideal monk.

The Complex Case of the *Historia Lausiaca*

Like the writings of Cassian, the *Historia Lausiaca* (HL) by Palladius has been preserved in multiple redactions and versions. In sorting through this maze, Cuthbert Butler did invaluable work in examining more than fifty-three Greek manuscripts and identifying two main redactions (or recensions as he calls them): the shorter G redaction and the longer B redaction. His edition from 1898–1904 of the G text, which he believed was the more authentic, represents a great work, but it is not without errors. The most serious problem is that it remains to a certain degree a compilation of readings from various textual traditions.

Most probably Palladius made one or several revisions of his work. Socrates the church historian uses material from Palladius on holy figures of Egypt in his *Ecclesiastical History*. He says, 'there is a specific treatise (*monobiblon*) on the subject, composed by the monk Palladius, who was a disciple of Evagrius, and gives all these particulars in minute detail'.⁵⁰ In 1990 Gabriel Bunge proposed that because Socrates does not call Palladius a bishop but simply a monk and Lausus is not mentioned in the title, this *monobiblon* must have been written before Palladius was ordained as bishop. Bunge suggests that Palladius later reworked and

⁴⁸ For inspiring discussions I am grateful to the participants of the Patristic Seminar in Lund, who treated the Greek Cassian in a series of seminars in autumn 2012.

⁴⁹ Krawiec 2012.

⁵⁰ Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.78–9; translation by Zenos 1890. For an overview of the scholarship on the *monobiblon* and the composition of the *Hist. Laus.*, see Katos 2011: 102–3 and ns. 22–3.

enlarged this early work when Lausus, the chamberlain at the court of Emperor Theodosius II, engaged him to write a treatise of his monastic experiences.⁵¹ According to the prologue (9.12–10.2), this was written during his twentieth year as bishop (ca. 419–20). Bunge believed that parts of this *monobiblon* were preserved in four Coptic liturgical texts (*synaxaria*), viz. the lives of Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt and Macarius of Alexandria, which contain additional material not found in the Greek work. Bunge suggests that some of the elements missing in the Greek text could be seen as Origenist and may have been expurgated from the text as a consequence of the Origenist controversies of the sixth century.⁵² The theory of Coptic primacy was presented already in 1887 by E. Amélineau.⁵³ Butler, however, convincingly dismissed the Coptic texts as simply later, expanded reworkings of earlier Greek redactions.⁵⁴

Like the writings of Cassian and many other ascetic works, longer and shorter parts in the form of sayings or narratives of the *Historia Lausiaca* are preserved in monastic collections and florilegia. The order of the material and the text often differ from those of the established editions. While the textual tradition of a work may go through different stages of revisions and the majority of the surviving text witnesses preserve the latest stage(s), excerpts from the same work that were incorporated into collections at an early stage often came to be transmitted independent of the common textual tradition.⁵⁵

Historia Lausiaca in the Collectio Scorialensis Parua

One such monastic collection that is of great interest for the study of the textual history of the *Historia Lausiaca* (HL) is the so-called *Collectio Scorialensis parua*. It is named after one of the manuscripts, Scorialensis R.II.1 (Revilla 21; ca. 1170–80), f. 1–32.⁵⁶ It is more of a florilegium

⁵¹ Bunge 1990. For more on Lausus and the conditions for the writing of the *Hist. Laus.*, see Rapp 2001.

⁵² The four Coptic synaxaria were translated into French by Vogüé 1990–92. All five Palladiana articles were subsequently published in Bunge and Vogüé 1994.

⁵³ Amélineau 1887: 28–9.

⁵⁴ Butler 1898: 107–55. See also Sheridan 2012 and Guillaumont 2009: 17–20.

⁵⁵ See Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997: 467.

⁵⁶ The other known manuscript is Parisinus gr. 919. Besides those manuscripts, there are a number of other manuscripts containing material from the *Scor. parua* collection: see my description in Dahlman 2013.

collection containing various, mostly longer hagiographical and apophthegmatic material, which is organized alphabetically according to the names of seventeen Desert Fathers. In this collection there are six stories that correspond to eight chapters in the *HL*: that is, chs. 22, 21, 17, 18, 32–4 and 37 in the edition by Butler.⁵⁷ These texts differ in many aspects from the edition by Butler.

The *HL* material in the *Scor. parua* collection is in fact another, or one could say a third, redaction that is shorter than the ‘short’ G redaction. Butler thought that the text of this collection was secondary. He knew of only one of the manuscripts containing the collection, Par. gr. 919, of which he said, ‘The text of *Hist. Laus.* is fundamentally a G text, akin (apparently) to PW; but it has been rewritten and abridged with such freedom that it is only occasionally of service for textual purposes. Besides the rewriting, the text has been further vitiated by intermixture with a B text.’⁵⁸ He thus thought of it as a contaminated G/B text.

In an earlier publication I have described some of the peculiarities of those texts in the *Scor. parua* collection that are also found in the *HL*.⁵⁹

1) The chapters numbered 21 and 22 by Butler come in the *Scor. parua* collection in inverted order: 22 before 21. They are part of a small dossier of five stories in the form of reports of tales by disciples of Antony the Great.⁶⁰ It has been suggested by Adelheid Wellhausen, who has edited the Latin version of the *HL*, that the redactions of these two texts are in fact the source for Palladius, who after a revision incorporated them into the *HL*.⁶¹

2) When analyzing the story of Macarius of Alexandria and comparing it with the corresponding ch. 18 in the *HL*, it is evident that there are a number of differences between the texts. The *Scor. parua* text is more concise and less elaborate than the *HL* text, which is written in a slightly higher style. The order of the episodes differs and almost all passages containing expressions referring to a first person singular are missing in the *Scor. parua* text. Those passages seem to be the reports of Palladius’ own memories and apparently *his* redactional work.

In this publication my preliminary conclusion is that the *Scor. parua* redaction is not likely to be a revision of the G text as suggested by Butler.

⁵⁷ Butler 1898 and 1904. ⁵⁸ Butler 1904: LXXIV. ⁵⁹ Dahlman 2013: 27–31.

⁶⁰ Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997: 462–3. ⁶¹ Wellhausen 2003: 178.

Table 3

<i>Scor. parua</i> , text no. 26 (Par. gr. 919) ⁶²	<i>HL</i> 17.5, ed. Butler ⁶³
ἐλέγετο γὰρ ἀδιαλείπτως ἐξίστασθαι, καὶ τῇ θεωρίᾳ σχολάζειν καὶ τῇ μελέτῃ· καὶ μηδὲν ἔαν τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ ἀδολεσχήσῃ εἰς τὰ τοῦ κόσμου πράγματα. For he was said to be in continual ecstasy, and to devote himself to <u>theoria</u> and <u>melete</u>. And he did not at all allow his mind to talk about the earthly things.	ἐλέγετο γὰρ ἀδιαλείπτως ἐξίστασθαι, καὶ μᾶλλον πλείονι χρόνῳ θεῷ προσδιατρίβειν ἢ τοῖς ὑπ’ οὐρανὸν πράγμασιν. For he was said to be in continual ecstasy. He occupied himself much more with <u>God</u> than with earthly things.

Rather, if we consider Palladius as the narrator of the story, there is good reason to believe that the *Scor. parua* text is an early redaction that he later revised.

The other stories in the *Scor. parua* collection, however, invite further consideration. Turning to the story of Macarius of Egypt and comparing it with the corresponding ch. 17 in the *HL*, two excerpts suffice to illustrate the primary character of the *Scor. parua* text.

Table 3 shows that the *Scor. parua* text states that Macarius devoted himself to *theoria* (‘contemplation’) and *melete* (‘meditation’), while the G text says ‘God’. Here a revision could have been made for dogmatic reasons. The exercising of *theoria* is an essential part of the mystical theology of Evagrius.⁶⁴ Most would argue that the name of God is less likely to be omitted, and that it is more likely to happen to words associated with Evagrius.

Paragraph 7 in Butler’s edition offers an illustrative example of the G text being longer, more elaborate, and composed in a higher literary style. As can be seen in Table 4, the *Scor. parua* text has the word ἄλογον (‘horse’), which belongs to a simple, popular style, whereas the word of the G text, φοράς (‘mare’), is more rare. Furthermore, the G text has a sentence (underlined in Table 4) not found in the *Scor. parua* text. It mentions God, stressing that God should be praised and Macarius’ virtue displayed. This makes the reading more pious than the *Scor. parua* version. Such a sentence might more likely be added than omitted by someone revising the text.

⁶² The edition and translation are my own.

⁶³ The paragraphs are according to the division first made by Lucot 1912, followed by Bartelink 1974b. The translations of the Butler text are from Meyer 1964.

⁶⁴ See for example Stefaniw 2007. For the use of the term *melete* in early ascetic texts, including Evagrius, see Rönnegård 2013.

Table 4

<i>Scor. parua</i> , text no. 26 (Par. gr. 919)	<i>HL</i> 17.7, ed. Butler
καὶ τέως μὲν ἐδυσφόρει, ἡνιᾶτο, ἐζήτει τὴν τοῦ κακοῦ λύσιν, ἔκειτο δὲ ἡ γυνὴ μήτε χόρτον ἐσθίουσα ὡς <u>ἄλογον</u> μήτε ἄρτον ὡς ἄνθρωπος. ὁ δὲ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς ἀκούων τὰ περὶ τοῦ αἰοδίου πατρὸς Μακαρίου, λαβὼν τὴν γυναῖκα ἀπήει πρὸς αὐτόν.	εἰσάγει, δεικνύει· οὐχ εὕρισκει τὸ πρόγμα. Ἐπὶ ἡμέρας τρεῖς οὔτε χόρτου μετέλαβεν ὡς <u>φορὰς</u> οὔτε ἄρτου ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἀμφοτέρων ἐστερημένη τῶν τροφῶν. <u>Τέλος</u> , ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ θεὸς καὶ φανῇ ἡ <u>ἀρετὴ τοῦ ἁγίου Μακαρίου</u> , ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς ἀγαγεῖν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν ἐρημον· καὶ φορβεώσας αὐτὴν ὡς ἵππον, οὕτως ἤγαγεν εἰς τὴν ἐρημον.
For a while [the husband] was angry and distressed, and sought a solution of the evil, but the woman lay down neither eating fodder as a <u>horse</u> nor bread as a human being. However, her husband heard about the famous father Macarius, took his wife and went away to him.	He brought them in and showed them. No solution was found. For three days she neither ate fodder as a <u>mare</u> nor ate bread as a human, but was deprived of both types of food. <u>At last, so that</u> <u>God might be praised and the virtue of the holy</u> <u>Macarius be made manifest</u> , it entered into the mind of the husband to lead her out into the desert. He bridled her like a horse and led her away to the desert.

Additional examples occur in the story about Abba Pachomius. This portion of text corresponds to three chapters in the *HL*, 32–4. The chapters on Pachomius were discussed by Wilhelm Bousset, who was inspired by a theory of Richard Reitzenstein. The latter suggested that Palladius had utilized written sources to a large degree, sources which he had rewritten freely and interpolated with his own phrases and reports (in first person singular or plural) to create the impression of a travelogue.⁶⁵ Bousset thought that one of those sources, an earlier Pachomian document, could be found in this text if the passages referring to Palladius' own memories (the 'Ich-stil') were removed.⁶⁶ Butler rejected the idea and stated that Palladius' personal reminiscences, the main passage being the reference to his friend Aphthonius (32.8), were not fictitious but reflect genuine experiences. He also pointed out that there are actually two Greek manuscripts and a Syriac translation that lack those references. These text witnesses are not freely rewritten but agree in word usage, with the exception of some trivial divergences.⁶⁷ The two Greek manuscripts mentioned by Butler are Par. gr. 1627 and Par. gr. 919. The former contains the *HL* mixed with chapters from the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. Both the story of

⁶⁵ Reitzenstein 1916. ⁶⁶ Bousset 1917: 191–2, and Bousset 1922.

⁶⁷ Butler 1920–1921: 233–6.

Macarius of Egypt (*HL* 17) and the story of Abba Pachomius (*HL* 32–4) are transmitted in Par. gr. 1627 in the same redaction as in the *Scor. parua* collection (to which Par. gr. 919 belongs). This redaction Butler labelled as a ‘unique rewriting of G’.⁶⁸ The Syriac version mentioned by Butler is found in the *Book of Paradise*, a compilation made by ‘Enānīšō’ in the seventh century. There are also Syriac manuscripts from the sixth century containing similar versions. The common ancestor of this redaction must therefore be very old.⁶⁹

François Halkin edited the textual episodes that correspond to *HL* 32–3 from the two Greek manuscripts he knew of, Par. gr. 1627 and Par. gr. 919. He rejected the thought that this redaction represented an earlier Pachomian document used by Palladius by pointing out the presence of the word ἐώρακα (‘I have seen’), suggesting that this must refer to Palladius. Further, he remarked that a number of readings in the text seem to be corrupt or derivative, and finally came to the conclusion that the material was secondary and derived from the *HL* text.⁷⁰

When looking at his examples, however, they appear less than convincing. Halkin believed that some rare words in the G text had been replaced by more common words or omitted in the Paris manuscripts. For example, he suggests that λεβιτῶνας (‘garments’; 32.3) has been replaced by χιτῶνας (with the same meaning), λαψάνας (‘charlock’; 32.11) by λάχανα (‘vegetables’) and that ἀποκυῆσαν (‘brought forth’; 32.8) has been omitted in the Paris manuscripts. Although this is possible, it is not particularly obvious – one could as well argue the opposite way, that common words (‘Volkssprache’) have been replaced by rare ones (‘Hochsprache’) in the G text in order to raise the stylistic level.

Other examples suggest that, as a whole, the text edited by Butler is more elaborate and has a higher style:

The examples (in Table 5) from the *Scor. parua* text could be seen as condensations, and the examples from the G text as expansions. Examples of rhetorical figures in the G text as above are alliteration and homoioteleuton. If the author wanted to raise the stylistic level, it would be natural to use the kind of rhetorical embellishments as in the G text.

Another reading mentioned by Halkin is the list of trade workers in the monastery, and the fact that the *Scor. parua* text omits the numbers (see Table 6).

⁶⁸ Butler 1904: XXI–XXII. ⁶⁹ Festugière 1971: CXVIII–CXIX. ⁷⁰ Halkin 1930: 295–6.

Table 5

<i>Scor. parua</i> , text no. 29	<i>HL</i> , ed. Butler
φιλάνθρωπος	32.1 φιλάνθρωπός τε καὶ φιλάδελφος
τὰ δὲ ἦττονα τοῖς ἀσκητικωτέροις	32.2 καὶ τὰ ἄτονα τοῖς ἀτονωτέροις καὶ ἀσκητικωτέροις
ἀπλουστέροις	32.4 ἀπλουστέροις καὶ ἀκεραιότεροις
τῶν βίων	32.5 τῶν τρόπων καὶ τῶν βίων
ἀπὸ ζέσεως θυμοῦ	33.3 ἀπὸ πολλῆς πονηρίας καὶ ζέσεως θυμοῦ

Table 6

<i>Scor. parua</i> , text no. 29	<i>HL</i> 32.9, ed. Butler
ἐν τούτοις ἑώρακα ῥάπτας, τέκτονas, καμηλαρίους, κναφεῖς.	[ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μοναστηρίῳ ἑώρακα ῥάπτas δεκαπέντε, χαλκεῖς ἑπτά, τέκτονas τέσσαρας, καμηλαρίους δώδεκα, κναφεῖς δεκαπέντε.]
In [the monasteries] I have seen tailors, carpenters, camel drivers, and fullers.	In this monastery I saw fifteen tailors, seven workers in metal, four carpenters, twelve camel drivers, and fifteen fullers.

Butler put this reading in square brackets along with two other passages in the chapter, since they are found only in B witnesses and not in the G witnesses. The two other instances where a passage is found only in the B witnesses are about eating meat in the monasteries. Those he included, since internal evidence strongly supported their authenticity. Butler could not explain as easily the omission of the list of trade workers in the G text. The reading found in the B witnesses (Table 6) he declared to be ‘the strongest single argument in support of the theory that Palladius may have made a revision of his book’.⁷¹ In his introduction Butler had discussed the theory that Palladius wrote the G text as a first draft and that the B text is a revised and enlarged second edition by Palladius himself. This theory, however, Butler himself dismissed.⁷² Concerning the *Scor. parua* manuscripts, Butler regarded the reading shown in Table 6 as an example of intermixture with the B text.⁷³ However, if we regard Butler’s reading as original, how to explain the missing numbers in *Scor. parua*? Could not Butler’s text as easily be seen as being enlarged by specifying numbers?

⁷¹ Butler 1904: 210.⁷² Butler 1904: LV–LVI.⁷³ Butler 1904: 210.

Table 7

<i>Scor. parua</i> , text no. 29	<i>HL 32.6</i> , ed. Butler
ἐτύπωσε δὲ διὰ πάσης τῆς ἡμέρας ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐχὰς δώδεκα καὶ ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσι δώδεκα·	ἐτύπωσε δὲ διὰ πάσης τῆς ἡμέρας ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐχὰς δώδεκα καὶ ἐν τῷ λυχνικῷ δώδεκα, καὶ ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσι δώδεκα, καὶ ἐννάτην ὥραν τρεῖς·
And [the angel] legislated for them to make twelve prayers during the whole day, and twelve at the all-night vigils.	And [the angel] commended that they pray twelve prayers throughout the day and twelve at lamp- lighting time, and that at all-night devotions they say twelve prayers, and three at the ninth hour. (tr. Meyer, modified by me)

Further, there are readings that are better preserved in the *Scor. parua* text that were ignored by Halkin. One important reading might be a reference to the prayers at the hours (Table 7).

The passage in *HL 32.6* (Table 7) is an important part of the ‘Rule of the Angel’ describing the monks’ liturgical praxis of the *synaxis*. Butler’s text is a reconstruction of readings from manuscripts of both the G and B redactions. Comparative tables of the readings of the manuscripts have been made by Armand Veilleux and Stig Frøyshov: the latter of whom also includes other sources (such as the *Vitae Pachomii*).⁷⁴ By comparing the different redactions of this rule, Veilleux shows that the Pachomian *synaxis* must have consisted originally of a psalm followed by a prayer at every hour, that is, twelve psalms at daytime and twelve at night, thus constituting a twenty-four-hour *Horologion* (*Book of Hours*).⁷⁵ Frøyshov, who analyzes the material at greater length, states that the two series of twelve psalms consisted of fixed, selected psalms.⁷⁶

These juxtapositions suggest that the fourfold division in Butler’s text is secondary, revealing a combination of two systems, the twenty-four-hour prayers and a service, which included Vespers (‘twelve at lamp-lighting time’; ἐν τῷ λυχνικῷ δώδεκα) and Nones (‘three at the ninth hour’; ἐννάτην ὥραν τρεῖς). One could argue that the change is not likely to have been made by Palladius himself but rather by a monastic reader who used a scheme of offices that included Vespers and Nones, and who therefore found it natural to revise the text to make the rules of prayer conform more closely to the current practice.

⁷⁴ Veilleux 1968: 326–7; Frøyshov 2004: 575. ⁷⁵ Veilleux 1968: 324–39.

⁷⁶ Frøyshov 2004: 569–77. See also Frøyshov 2005 and 2007.

Frøyshov argues that the 'Rule of the Angel' existed in Coptic independently of the work by Palladius. He suggests that Palladius did not include it in his first composition, the *monobiblon*, but only in his second reworking, the *HL*. Frøyshov cites two facts generally used to support this: first, the absence of the Rule in the Syriac *HL* *R1/R2 and in some of the *Vitae Pachomii* (gr. G1, gr. G2 and the Coptic); secondly, the fact that Socrates does not mention it in his *Ecclesiastical History*.⁷⁷ Frøyshov refers to René Draguet, who studied the Syriac versions and identified four main threads with several subversions. Draguet presumed a Coptic source text for the Rule and for the whole chapter 32 that Palladius reused.⁷⁸ For other *HL* chapters Draguet believed that Palladius reused the composition of an Egyptian author, who wrote in copticizing Greek. The Syriac versions R1/R2 he thought depend on this original work.⁷⁹ Draguet's views have been criticized by Klaus Nickau and Sebastian Brock, who both suggest that both R1 and R2 might go back to an earlier edition by Palladius.⁸⁰ This is more likely in that there is no evidence that Palladius reused extensive material from a Coptic or copticizing, Greek-writing author, although he may have used some written material from different sources. It is probable that the Rule, as well as passages referring to Palladius' own memories, were not included in his first edition, but it is hard to say what the text of the early *monobiblon* consisted of with any certainty.

As stated above, Butler claimed that the *HL* chapters 17 and 32–4 in two manuscripts, Par. gr. 1627 and Par. gr. 919 (i.e., the *Scor. parua* collection), contained a 'unique rewriting of G'.⁸¹ However, the features discussed in this contribution suggest that the *Scor. parua* text represents an early stage of Palladius' *HL*. The G text seems to represent a later stage framed as an adaptation, or an expanded reworking, partly by Palladius himself (as for example the inclusion of passages referring to his own memories), but also by others. The *Scor. parua* redaction has survived because it was incorporated into this *AP* collection.

More research and editing of the many various redactions in Greek and other languages of the *HL* remains a desideratum. This will be required in order to trace changes and stages in the development of the text. The Syriac versions are especially important. Already in the sixth century several different Syriac versions existed. Draguet questioned

⁷⁷ Frøyshov 2004: 576. ⁷⁸ Draguet 1944–1945. ⁷⁹ Draguet 1978b: 22*–59*, 75*–83*.

⁸⁰ Nickau 2001; Brock 2008: 190–5. Nickau also suggests that they might derive from a later abridgement of Palladius' text.

⁸¹ Butler 1904: XXI–XXII.

Butler's grouping of an 'original' G redaction of the *HL* and a late derivative B redaction. He stated that there are Syriac manuscripts from the sixth century which contain readings that indicate a stage in between the G and B redactions.⁸²

For the *Scor. parua* texts, the most interesting Syriac version may be a collection of eighteen stories, which Draguet called 'Recueil des XVIII (dix-huitième) histoires' (*RecXVIII*). This is a very old collection, since it is preserved in three Syriac manuscripts from the sixth century, one of them being the *Sinaiticus syr.* 46 from the year 534.⁸³ This unedited collection contains fourteen stories that correspond to seventeen *HL* chapters: 1+2, 6, 9+10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22, 23, 34, 37, 21, 17+18. It likewise contains all the stories that are also found in the *Scor. parua* collection except the passages corresponding to chs. 32–3. Of the six chapters (22, 18, 35, 37, 21, 38) known to be included in the Armenian translation, four are also found in the *Scor. parua* collection.⁸⁴ It should be noted that in all these three collections, the sequencing of chs. 21 and 22 is again inverted.

Conclusion

Monastic readers and writers used texts freely, transforming and rearranging them for their own specific purposes. As monastic authors sought to adapt their texts to new situations and audiences, it is no surprise that written works needed constant revision, nor that monastic writers were using the same strategies as their Graeco-Roman counterparts. As noted above, composing and rewriting literature in this way reflects how people were trained at school.

Cassian, Palladius and many other early Christian authors would have revised their own works for many different reasons. However, it is often hard to know if specific revisions can be explained as being made by the author himself, by disciples, or by later followers. The redactions discussed in this paper suggest their authors' continued literary activity in writing, revising and reworking their own and others' works. One motivation for revision was simply correcting one's own mistakes. Some redactions are subject to stylistic and rhetorical refinement; others, to simplification. In other cases revision was done to make texts conform to new situations

⁸² Draguet 1978b: 60*–64*, 69*–70*, 76*.

⁸³ Draguet 1978a: 21*–31*, 39*; Draguet 1978b: 60*–64*, 76*. On *Sin. syr.* 46, see Holmberg 2013.

⁸⁴ See the description by Armitage Robinson, in Butler 1898: 97–106.

and contexts, as for example for dogmatic reasons. Another motivation was changing practice, which created a need or inspiration to adapt texts to new traditions. Revisions were also common when texts were introduced into new cultural settings, as Jason Zaborowski shows in his contribution in this volume, when discussing the Arabic translations of the *AP*.⁸⁵

Perhaps as important, these examples demonstrate how vital it is to study the material – its text form, order and combination, and so on – of monastic collections and the relation between the collections and the ‘standard’ versions and editions of the works. The multitude of redactions and versions of each of these textual traditions from the Classical authors to the *HL* in many various languages testify to their great popularity. Although scholarly quest for the earliest recoverable form of an author’s work is important, we should also study the varieties of forms for many other reasons – to gain knowledge of the processes of transmission, translation, expansion, abbreviation and transformation, and of the persons and communities using, reading and transmitting the texts and their role in monastic scholarship, teaching and training.

⁸⁵ See Zaborowski, this volume.

14 | Production, Distribution and Ownership of Books in the Monasteries of Upper Egypt: the Evidence of the Nag Hammadi Colophons

HUGO LUNDHAUG AND LANCE JENOTT*

While most research on the Nag Hammadi Codices has focused on the hypothetical Greek originals of the preserved Coptic texts, this article concentrates instead on the codices themselves and the evidence they provide of their scribes and users, aiming to answer questions concerning ownership, scribal co-operation, and networks of literary exchange. Focusing on the colophons, and considering comparative evidence from the fourth century and beyond, this article argues that the Nag Hammadi Codices were most likely produced and read by monks.

The Abbot and His Scribe

In some of the Nag Hammadi Codices, the scribes have provided us with important clues, in the form of short colophons, that may help us flesh out the social context of the production, use, ownership, and distribution of the codices. We will begin with the one found at the very end of Codex VII (Figure 14.1), which gives us a rare window onto the relationship between the scribe and the intended owner of the codex, as well as the identity of the latter. In five lines set apart from the end of the last tractate of the codex by short horizontal strokes, and centered on the page rather than being aligned with the margins like the preceding text, we are told that

ⲡⲉⲓⲗⲱⲙⲉ ⲡⲁⲩⲏⲛⲧⲉⲱⲧ
ⲡⲉ ⲡⲱⲛⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲥⲁⲗⲉ.

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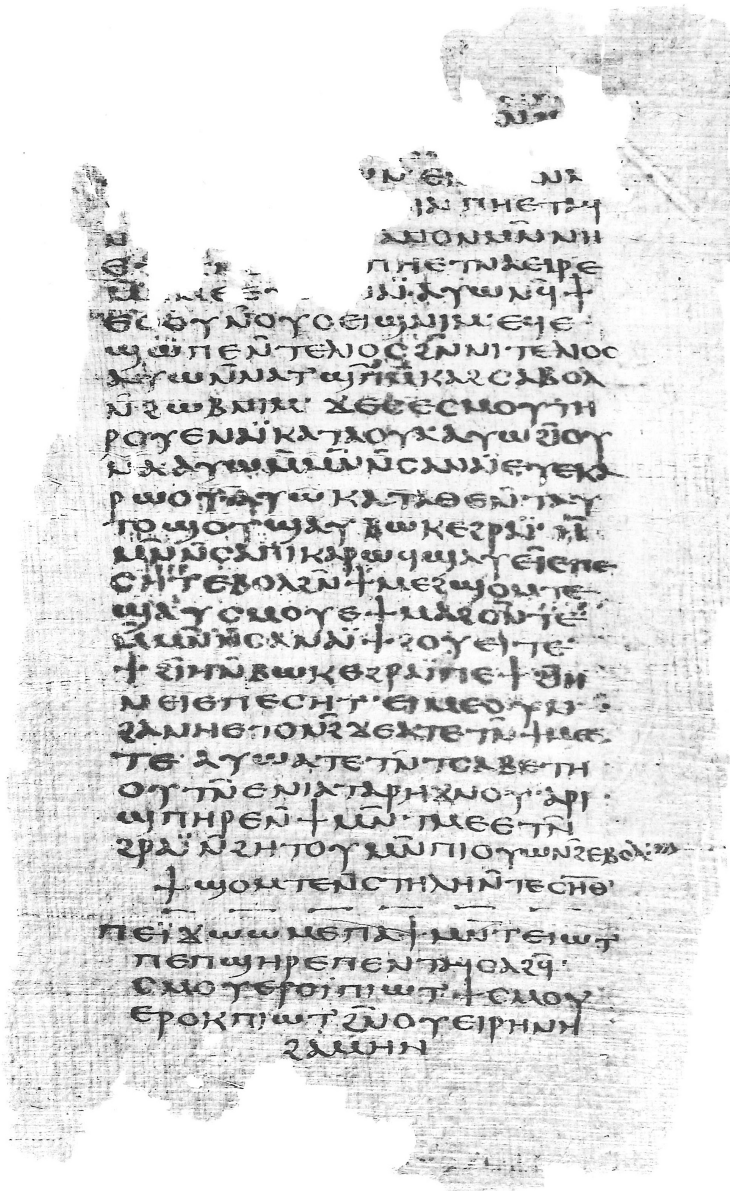


Figure 14.1 Colophon – Nag Hammadi Codex VII 127

смоу ерої пѡт ꝥсмоу
 ерок пѡт ꝥноуѣрнн
 глмнн¹

¹ *Steles Seth* 127.28–31; Coptic text in Robinson and Goehring 1996: 420. All translations from Coptic throughout this article are our own.

This book belongs to the fatherhood.
 It was the son who copied it.
 Bless me, Father. I bless
 you, Father, in peace.
 Amen.

Colophons like this one, in which scribes ask for blessings for the work they have done, are relatively common in Coptic monastic manuscripts.² In the context of Codex VII, “this book” makes most sense as a reference to the Codex itself as a whole. The scribe, who refers to himself as a “son” (a common self-reference for monks addressing their superiors in the monastic hierarchy), states that the codex belongs to “the fatherhood” (ⲡⲁⲧⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ), a key term for the interpretation of the colophon. Although some scholars have suggested that “the fatherhood” must refer back to internal theological concepts found in the Codex,³ it is significant that the term “fatherhood” is widely attested as a reverential title for addressing ecclesiastical officials and monastic leaders in a wide range of sources.⁴ Understood as a reference to the son’s spiritual “father,” the intended owner of Codex VII would be the abbot of the

² The colophons of the monastic codices published in Lantschoot 1929 abound with similar expressions to what we find in the colophons of Nag Hammadi Codices VII and II. See, e.g., the colophon of M595, a ninth-century homiletic miscellany from the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in the Fayum, where we find the statement: ⲥⲟⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲕⲱ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲁⲉⲓⲱⲧⲉ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ (Depuydt 1993: I, 350; Lantschoot 1929: 18).

³ Khosroyev 1995a: 94–6.

⁴ See, e.g., the Panegyric of Makarius of Tkow, where Dioscorus addresses Papnoute the archimandrite as ⲧⲉⲕ ⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ, “your Fatherhood” (15.1; Johnson 1980: 116). The anchorite Apa Phib is called ⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ in the *Life of Apa Phib* (Vivian 2005: 219, 221); Shenoute also speaks of monastic and ecclesiastical leaders as ⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ (*I Am Amazed* 376 [HB 37]). Khosroyev (1995a: 95; 1995b: 204) shows no awareness of such evidence when he asserts that the term “fatherhood” (ⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ/ⲡⲟⲧⲣⲟⲧⲧⲉⲩ) is rarely used to refer to monastic leaders, and argues that when Shenoute uses it, it is rather with reference to “gnostics.” Yet it is clear from the context in which Shenoute uses the term that he is in fact referring to monastic and ecclesiastical authorities. Shenoute certainly accuses these leaders of heresy, but the reason why he singles out “seniorities” (ⲏⲛⲧⲏⲟⲥ) and “fatherhoods” (ⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ) for chastisement is not because these terms have a specific heretical or “gnostic” connotation, but precisely because they refer to leaders in trusted positions, whom Shenoute felt to be a threat to the orthodoxy of the Christian communities of Upper Egypt (see Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 370–6 [HB 36–7], esp. 376; Cristea 2011: 158–61). Shenoute also uses the term “your holy Fatherhood” (ⲧⲉⲕⲏⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ) to address Archbishop Timothy of Alexandria in a letter (Shenoute, *Ad Timotheum archiepiscopum Alexandrinum*, HD 301=Leipoldt [1906–13]: III.13). For use of the term in documentary papyri and ostraca, see, e.g., W. E. Crum, *The Coptic Papyri*, in Petrie 1892: 49; Crum 1902: 48, 49, 52; Till 1960: nos. 169, 171, 184, 189, 197, 201, 202, 203, 223, 227, 228, 235, 238, 241, 244, 253, 258, 276, 281, 287, 292 (also referred to in Harrauer 1995: 71, no. 29), 295, 299, 303, 314, 347, 349, 353, 356, 386; Crum, *et al.* 1926: II nos. 127, 129, 131, 141, 146, 152, 163, 168, 172, 175, 180, 190, 217, 219, 223, 225, 227, 241, 243, 253, 256, 263, 266, 268, 269, 277, 279, 281, 296, 299, 300, 301, 312, 319, 323, 327, 328, 330, 336, 337, 342, 354, 415, 431, 432, 433, 436,

monastic community to which the scribe belonged.⁵ The possibility that this book belonged to an abbot is especially interesting when placed alongside a monastic rule from Shenoute's *Canon* 5 that prescribes procedures for the control of books in Shenoute's monasteries:

If we need to examine or copy books that we do not have, we shall not be permitted to seek them outside without (the permission of) the Elder. Nor if we are brought books from outside that are appropriate to read, or letters, shall we give them to anyone among us unless we have informed him of them. Nor shall anyone among us read them at all without having spoken with him first, for perhaps indeed there are words in them that are not appropriate for a person to hear.⁶

As we can see, there was a regime of censorship in place to control and monitor the reading practices of the monks, and it was “the Elder” (πρῶτος) who had the authority to decide which books or letters could be brought into the monastery, and who would be allowed to read them.⁷ Any decision to acquire or copy books or letters had to be cleared by the highest authority in the monastery. Shenoute argues for the necessity of such regulations on the basis of the potentially dangerous nature of the contents of certain writings.

If Nag Hammadi Codex VII was produced in such an environment of censorship, the statement that it “belongs to the fatherhood” may simply indicate that this codex was under the direct control of the abbot. Perhaps it was even meant for his eyes only? Considering the contents of Codex VII, including such writings as the *Paraphrase of Shem*, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, it could quite conceivably have been regarded as too advanced or even dangerous reading for the common monk.⁸

449, 480, 482, 483, 489, 501. The equivalent Greek term πατριότης is found in the Meletian monastic documents published by Bell 1924 (77).

⁵ Scholten (1988: 162–3) concludes on similar grounds that ⲙⲏⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ in Codex VII's colophon probably refers to the abbot of a Pachomian monastery.

⁶ Shenoute, *You, God the Eternal*, XS 385–6: ⲉⲛⲉⲭⲱⲙⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲛⲥⲟⲩ ⲛⲏⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲱⲁⲛⲁⲣⲉ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲱⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ ⲉⲥⲁⲓ ⲉⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲱⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲥⲱⲩ ⲉⲓⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲭⲏⲡⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲩⲱⲁⲛⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲉⲛⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲱⲩⲉ ⲉⲱⲩⲟⲩ ⲛ ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲛⲛⲉⲧⲁⲩ ⲛⲗⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲏ ⲉⲛⲛⲉⲧⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲉⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲏ ⲱⲩ ⲉⲱⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲧⲏⲣⲩ ⲛⲡⲟⲩⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲛⲱⲟⲣⲏ ⲭⲉⲛⲉⲱⲁⲕ ⲣⲱ ⲟⲩⲛⲉⲱⲁⲩⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲟⲩ ⲱⲩⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲥⲱⲧⲏ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ (Leipoldt 1906–1913: IV.72). On the basis of its preserved parts, *Canon* 5 seems to have contained only this one text, *You, God the Eternal* (clavis coptica 0480; see Emmel 2004: 575–6).

⁷ For the hierarchical organization of Shenoute's monasteries, see Layton 2007: 54; Layton 2008: 75–7; Layton 2009: 170–7.

⁸ See the comments of Chadwick 1980: 16.

ἀΡΙΠΑΜΕΕΥΕ ΖΩ ΝΑΣΝΗΥ	Remember me also, my brothers,
ζ[ῆ]ΝΕΤῆΠΡΟΣΕΥΧῆ	in your prayers.
Ε[Ι]ΡΗΝΗ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΙΣ	Peace to the holy ones
ΜΗΝΙΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ ⁹	and the spirituals.

Although this looks very much like a colophon written by the scribe of Codex II, Alexandr Khosroyev has argued that the scribe copied it from his *Vorlage*, and that it must have been present even in an earlier Greek version of the text. Khosroyev bases his argument on the fact that the third line of the colophon, ε[ι]ρήνη τοις αγίοις (“peace to the holy ones”), is written entirely in Greek, and argues that it would not have been phrased like this if the colophon was composed by a scribe in the Coptic phase of transmission.¹⁰

There are problems with Khosroyev’s line of reasoning, however, for it ignores the fact that three of the four lines are written in Coptic, and that the line in Greek is simply a common blessing of peace that Coptic-speaking Christians would have had no difficulty understanding without translation. Considering how lines 1, 2, and 4 of the colophon are phrased in Coptic, and how line 3 has been integrated in the passage as a whole, there is no need to presuppose a Greek *Vorlage* that was later translated, but only partially, into Coptic together with the preceding text. Such an argument simply ignores the extensive evidence for bilingualism in Egypt, especially in formulaic passages such as this one.¹¹

There is nothing peculiar about a Greek phrase in a Coptic colophon. Indeed, one finds instances of completely Greek phrases used in colophons on Coptic texts in manuscripts as late as the medieval parchments from the White Monastery.¹² In the Nag Hammadi Codices we find a similar case at the end of the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, written on the front flyleaf of Codex I (Figure 14.3). Here the phrase ἐν εἰρήνῃ, “in peace,” framed by a decorative

⁹ *Thom. Cont.* 145.20–3 (Layton and Turner 1989: 204). ¹⁰ Khosroyev 1995a: 93.

¹¹ As Bagnall (2011b: 87) points out, “In formulaic epistolary elements, then, there is fairly ready movement from one language to the other.” On Greek–Coptic bilingualism in general, see Fournet 2009: 418–51, esp. 438, with an image of P. Amh. II 145; Clackson 2010.

¹² See, e.g., *BnF Copte* 161⁶ f. 42: τοῦ μοναστηρίου ἁγίου πατρὸς ἐμῶν ἀββᾶ σενουθίου ἀρχιμῆναδριτοῦ (“of the holy monastery of our father Abba Senouthios, archimandrite”). Even within texts composed entirely in Coptic, we find instances of Greek phrases used interchangeably with Coptic ones. See, e.g., Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 374 (HB 37=YU 33 [Cristea 2011: 160]), where Shenoute uses both the Greek σῶμα χριστοῦ αἷμα χριστοῦ (“body of Christ, blood of Christ”), and the Coptic περσῶμα and περσνοϋ (“his body and his blood”).

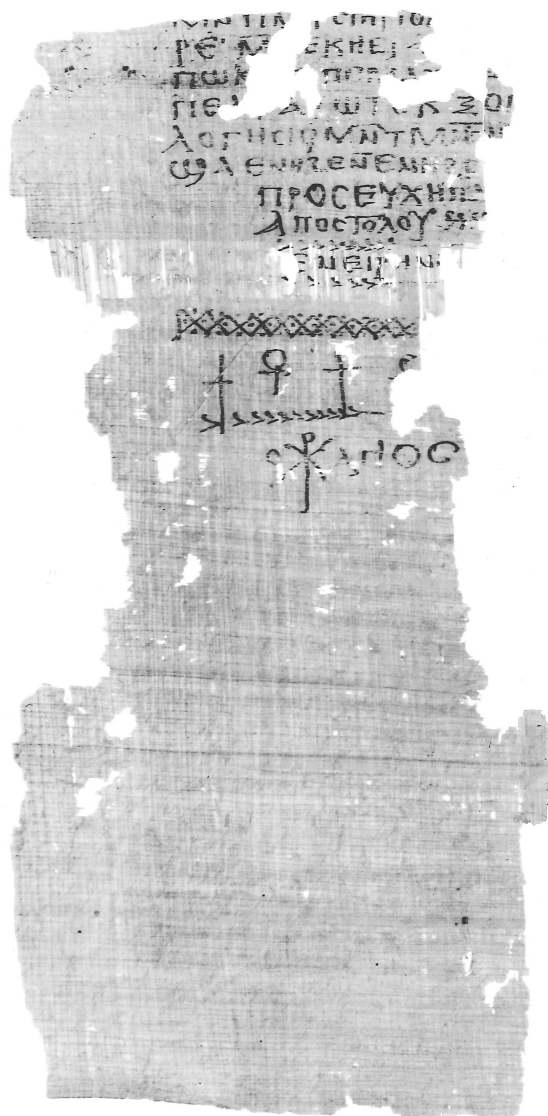


Figure 14.3 Colophon – Nag Hammadi Codex I Flyleaf B

box, follows the main title and is itself followed by further, more elaborate decoration with crosses, including *cruces ansatae* and the Greek phrase ο ἅγιος, “Christ is Holy.”

These formulas are not unique to the Nag Hammadi Codices, but are well attested in both colophons and documentary papyri from Egypt. The phrase “peace to the holy ones and the spirituals” in Codex II, for example, has an especially close parallel in the so-called Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, where

the colophon following the *Apology of Phileas* reads ἱρηνὴ τοῖς ἀγίοις πάσιν, “Peace to all the holy ones,” followed by a *crux ansata* similar to those found in Codex I. Requests for remembrance, like the one in Codex II’s colophon, are found often in colophons of literary manuscripts,¹³ and are commonplace in Coptic ostraca,¹⁴ inscriptions,¹⁵ and papyri¹⁶ written by monks from all across Egypt.

References to “spirituals” and spiritual brothers, as seen in the colophon in Codex II, are also found regularly in monastic texts, including the papyrus fragments reused as stuffing in the covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices themselves. The Coptic fragment C3 from the cover of Codex VII, for example, refers to “brothers in the spirit” (ἐν πνεύματι) and exhorts them with the vocative exclamation, “O brothers” (ὦ ἀδελφοί).¹⁷ One may see another reference to the monastic audience of Codex II following the title of the final tractate, the *Book of Thomas*, where one reads “The athlete writes to the perfect” (ὁ ἀθλητὴς ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἡμιτελεῖος).¹⁸ Pachomian literature repeatedly refers to spiritually mature people as “the perfect,” and as “athletes” of truth and Christ.¹⁹ In short, there is nothing in the colophon of Codex II that does not make perfect sense from the point of view of a monastic scribal context.

Networks of Literary Exchange

We get an even more specific glimpse into the world of book production and exchange from a note added to Nag Hammadi Codex VI (Figure 14.4),

¹³ See, e.g., the colophon of *British Museum Ms. Oriental No. 7025*, from the Monastery of St. Mercurius at Edfu, written by the scribe Theopistos in the year 982, “Remember me in love, everyone who will read in this book” (ἀριπαύετε ἀγαπᾶτε ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς βιβλίου) (Budge 1914: 248). In a colophon following a *Discourse on Saint Michael the Archangel* attributed to Archbishop Timothy II of Alexandria in a codex from the same discovery, *British Museum Ms. Oriental No. 7029*, dating to 992, we find, “Remember me in love, my fathers and my brothers. Behold my repentance. Pray to the Lord on my behalf” (ἀριπαύετε ἀγαπᾶτε πατέρες ἀδελφοί· ἰδοὺ τὴν μετάνοιαν· ἱκετεύω τὸν κύριον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ) (Budge 1915: 524). In the colophon preserved in White Monastery fragment *BnF Copte 161*⁶ f. 42, we similarly find ἀριπαύετε ἀγαπᾶτε ἀδελφοί· ἰδοὺ τὴν μετάνοιαν· ἐρωῶ τὸν κύριον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ. Such examples are common.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Till 1960: nos. 171, 204, 221, 281; *P. Lond.* 1920, 1921 (Bell 1924: 92, 95).

¹⁵ Inscriptions with similar formulae are common all across Egypt, including in the Wadi Sheikh Ali, in the vicinity of Faw Qibli and thus close to the discovery sites of both the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dishna Papers (Meyer 1983: esp. 78–80).

¹⁶ See, e.g., *P. Lond.* 1920 (Bell 1924: 92). ¹⁷ Barns, *et al.* 1981: 133.

¹⁸ *Thom. Cont.* 145.18–19 (Layton and Turner 1989: 204).

¹⁹ The perfect: *SBo* 60, 79, 199, 202; *G*¹ 54, 126, 129; see also *G*¹ 84, 99, 107. Athletes: *G*¹ 12, 22, 79, 84.

which to our knowledge is unique in its contents and execution, and gives us welcome insight into networks of literary exchange in which these books played a part.²⁰ The scribe wrote the note between the seventh and eighth texts of the codex, and distinguished it visually from these by writing it in a smaller hand, with more crowded letters, and enclosing it in a decorative box resembling a *tabula ansata*. The scribe addresses the readers in the second person plural, saying:

I have copied this one text of his.²¹ Indeed, very many of his (texts) have come to me. I have not copied them, thinking that they have (already) come to you. For truly I hesitate to copy these for you since they may have come to you, and the matter may burden you. For the texts of that one which have come to me are many.²²

This is a tricky note to interpret, as there are several problems that need to be addressed. First, what does “this one text of his” refer to? Secondly, which texts did the scribe hesitate to copy? Thirdly, why would it be a burden for the recipients of the codex to receive these texts? And finally, what can this note tell us about the relationship between the scribe and the recipients?

Scholars have focused mostly on the first of these questions, namely to which text “this one text of his” refers. Is it the text before the note, the so-called *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, or the one after it, the so-called *Asclepius*?²³ While no consensus has been reached on this issue, most scholars agree that the note is evidence that the scribe and recipients had some kind of pre-arranged plan for the contents of the codex, perhaps even a specific sequence of texts,²⁴ a plan which the scribe then decided to alter in the course of copying. Indeed, it would be difficult otherwise to explain why the scribe felt compelled to write such a note in the first place, and to draw special attention to the fact that he had copied “this one text.”

²⁰ See also Bagnall’s contribution to this volume.

²¹ “His” here and subsequently probably refers to the sage Hermes Trismegistus, to whom the texts before and after the note are attributed.

²² VI,7a: 65.8–14: πιοχα μεν λογος ηταεισαρῳ ηταq αραρ γαρ τονω ηταqει ετοοτ᾽ ηπισαροῦ εινεεγε χεαγει ετητηνε καιγαρ ηδισταζε ειςραῖ ηναῖ ηητην χεθεωακ αγει ετητηνε ητεπερωβ ρῥισε ηητην· επι ηαρωοῦ γαρ ηοιηλογος εταγει ετοοτ᾽ ητεπη (Parrott 1979: 64).

²³ Both lack titles in the manuscript. Scholars in favor of seeing VI,8 (*Asclepius*) as the treatise mentioned in the note include Doresse 1956: 58–9; Krause and Labib 1971: 25; Mahé 1982: 461–4; Khosroyev 1995a: 10–13. Those in favor of VI,7 (*Prayer*) include Parrott 1979; Williams and Jenott 2006: 1035–43; Schenke 1997 also argued that the note referred to the preceding text, but understood it as VI,7 together with VI,6.

²⁴ See Williams 1995; Williams 1996: 247–60.

ΟΤΟΥΨΕ ΠΙΨΕΡΟΚΛΑΤΕ
 ΨΙΠΕΣΙΒΙΟCΝ† ΙΝΕ· Ν
 ΔΥΟΤΧΕΝΔΙΕΨΥΛΗΧΛΑΡ
 ΛΟΠΛΑΞΕΝΕΤΕΡΗΟΝ· ΛΩ
 ΔΥΒΩΚΕΤΝΛΟΜΩΜΗΤΕ
 ΤΡΟΦΗΕΟCΑΛΛΕΙΝCΝΟΥ
 ΝΥΤΕ· 125
 ΠΟΤΑΜΕΝΟCΤΕΤΑΙΕΔΥΝΤΑ
 ΛΙΛΑΓΑΤΟΝΩCΤΑΙΕΤΟCΤΑΤΗ
 ΔΙΟΤΕΙΜΕΤΕΧΕΥΤΕΤΗΝΕ
 ΚΑΙΓΑΡ†ΔΙΟΤΑΞΕΙCΑΝΝΑΙΝΗ
 ΤΗΧΕΜΕΨΛΛΑΤΕCΕΤΗΤΗΝΕΝΤΕ
 ΤΙΖΩΚΕΤΙΕCΕΝΗΤΥΕΠΙΝΑΨΩΡ
 ΓΥΝΕΙΝΛΟCΕΤΑΤΕΤΕΠΟΤΗΤΕΠ
 ΕΨΥΧΕΚΟΜΨΥΔΕCΝΤΕΦΩΚΑ
 ΠΕΙΜΑCΤΗΡΙΟΝ· ΔΤΩΘΙΚΩΝ
 ΝΨΥΠΗΓΕΝΓΝΑΤΕΡΟCΝΤΕΤΟΝ
 ΟΤΕΙΔΕΨΔΨΩΠΕCΧΟΛΥΤΑ
 ΦΟΟΤΤΩΤΕCΑΜΕ· ΖΟΤΛΩC
 ΕΨΥΔΝΕΙCΤΑΚΩΝΨΥΜΨΩCΕCΧΟ
 ΝCΙΠΕCΠΕΡΜΑΝΤΕCΝΟΤΕΠ
 ΜΑΤΨΥΓΕΤΩΥΝΕΔΙΝΤCΟΝ
 ΜΦΟΟΤΤ· ΦΟΟΤΤΖΩΨΥΡ
 ΧΙΝΤCΟΜΗΤCΟΜΕCΕΡΟΥ· ΖΩC·
 ΕΤΕΠΕΡΜΑΓΕΝΕΤΕΠΛΑ
 ΕΤΕΠΛΠΙCΤΗΡΙΟΝΗΤC
 ΝΟΤCΙΔΕΤΕΙΡΕΜΜΟΥΝΟΤΥΠ
 ΧΕΚΑΔCΕΝΕΤΟCΕΨΥΜΦΟC
 ΡΑCΧΗΜΟΝΙΝΝΑΥΝΙΔΕCΧΟ
 ΝΤΛΝΜΦΩΚΕΤΝΜΑΤ· ΠΟΤΑ
 ΓΑΠΟΤΑΜΜΟΟΤΥ†ΥΠCΙΧΠ
 ΗCΤΕΨΥΝΝΑΤCΟΟΤΝΜΗΤΩC
 ΕΨΥΧΕΨΥΟΟΤΠΝΝΑΨΑΛΗCΩC
 ΔΤΩΝΝΑΤΝΑΖΤΕ· ΝΖΟΤΟΔΕ
 ΖΩΜΑΤCΤΗΡΙΟΝΕΤΟΤΑΛΛΕ
 ΝΤΕΝΛΟΤCΝΗΝΗΖΗΤΕ
 ΟΤΗΜΟΝΟΝΧΕΕΤΠΙCΩΤΗ
 ΑΛΛΑΝCΕΝΔΥ· ΕΤΧΕΠΑ

Figure 14.4 Colophon – Nag Hammadi Codex VI

What was the nature of the relationship between the scribe and the recipients of the codex? Khosroyev, who is among the few to have discussed this question in depth, assumes that the relationship is of a commercial nature, and that the scribe writes to his “customers” concerning their “order.”²⁵ For Khosroyev, the assumed commercial relationship between the scribe and his addressees is an argument in support of his broader thesis that the Nag Hammadi Codices originated among urban literates who, given their choice of reading materials, must have had a “syncretistic mentality” and “were in no way traditionalists.” If they were in any way Christians, he argues, they were certainly “outside the Church,” and did not have anything to do with Christian monasticism.²⁶

On the basis of the scribal note in Codex VI, Khosroyev proposes that the scribe had been commissioned to copy texts 1–7 (everything from the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* to the *Prayer of Thanksgiving*), but that he then decided to augment the original request by adding the excerpt from *Asclepius* at the end. Why did the scribe do this? According to Khosroyev, the addition of *Asclepius* was needed in order to fill some fourteen blank pages that remained after the scribe had finished copying tractates 1–7. He therefore wrote the note in order to explain himself and to apologize for being so bold as to add a text that his customers had not originally requested.²⁷

There are, however, several difficulties with this explanation. First of all, it should be observed that the scribe does not actually use any apologetic language in the note. Secondly, why would a paid scribe, on his own volition, not only alter a customer’s order, but then proceed to write an explanation for it *into the codex itself*, rather than on a separate piece of papyrus or ostrakon? And finally, if the contents of the codex had been planned beforehand, then why did the scribe end up with nearly fourteen blank pages at the end of the volume in the first place? According to this explanation, one would then have to assume that the scribe, who Khosroyev believes was a paid professional, drastically miscalculated the amount of pages needed for the job. Such a scenario is not very likely, especially when there are better explanations.

²⁵ Khosroyev 1995a: 10.

²⁶ Khosroyev 1995a: 98, 101 (quotations are our translations of Khosroyev’s German expressions); see also 13, where, with reference to the specific owners of Codex VI, Khosroyev proposes that, “es sich um eine religiöse Gemeinde (vielleicht eine Familie) handelte, deren Mitglieder eine synkretistische Religiosität besaßen.”

²⁷ Khosroyev 1995a: 12.

If we consider instead the *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, the much shorter text directly preceding the scribal note, as the addition, then it appears that the scribe calculated almost perfectly the amount of space he would need to make up in order to include the short *Prayer of Thanksgiving* without losing anything from the original plan for the Codex. For the size of the *Prayer of Thanksgiving* together with the scribal note actually corresponds precisely to the amount of “extra” lines per page that the scribe crammed into the remaining pages of the codex once he decided to add the *Prayer of Thanksgiving*.²⁸ In contrast to Khosroyev’s scenario of a bumbling scribe who made a gross miscalculation, this explanation suggests that the scribe knew very well what he was doing, and that he was quite capable of calculating exactly the space he needed.²⁹

Instead of regarding the scribe of Codex VI as a hired hand working on a commissioned job, it seems more likely that he and the recipients of the book belonged to a network of people who regularly lent, borrowed, and copied books for one another. Indeed, as several studies have shown, informal and non-commercial networks of literary exchange were the primary means through which people in Antiquity published their own compositions and acquired new books.³⁰ The governing principle was reciprocity – share a book, and get one back. As one Christian woman wrote to her friend in a letter found at Oxyrhynchus, “To my dearest lord sister in the Lord, greetings. Lend Ezra, since I have lent you the little Genesis. Farewell from us in God.”³¹ Here we see people lending books to each other. Another type of request involves people asking friends not to lend, but to “make copies and send” books.³² In this case, however, the labor and expense of copying falls upon the person who already has the book and is being asked to share it. Thus the person who makes such a request also frequently sends one or more books in order to

²⁸ Williams and Jenott 2006: 1029–34, esp. 1034.

²⁹ See Dahlman’s contribution to this volume for a similar example, here involving revision and reworking of monastic texts.

³⁰ Starr 1987: 213–23; Gamble 1995: 82–143, esp. 82–95, 132–43; Haines-Eitzen 2000: 77–104; Kotsifou 2007: 48–66.

³¹ *P. Oxy.* 4365 (Otranto 2000: 128).

³² For example, *P. Oxy.* 2192: “Make and send me copies of books 6 and 7 of Hypsicrates’ *Men Made Fun of in Comedy*” (Turner 1971: 114); see Turner 1968: 87. Similar requests are found in Jerome. *Ep.* 5.2 (see below) and 10.3. In Jerome. *Ep.* 47.3 and 49.4, he offers to send people treatises if they do not already have them. He could mean that he will lend them a copy, but more likely means that he will have copies made for the recipients to keep. Thus in *Ep.* 49.4, he says that he sent copies of his commentaries on the prophets to Domnio.

maintain the principle of reciprocity.³³ A letter written by Jerome from his hermitage in the Syrian desert to his friend Florentius in Jerusalem gives us an example of such book exchange networks. Jerome writes:

I must ask you to have written on papyrus by a copyist certain books which the subjoined list will show that I do not possess. I beg also that you send me the interpretation of the Psalms of David and the copious work on Synods of the reverend Hilary, which I copied for him at Trèves with my own hand.

Jerome then adds that since he has:

an abundance of volumes of the sacred library, you may enjoin me in turn. I will send you whatever you wish. And do not suppose that it will burden me; I have pupils devoted to the art of copying. Nor do I merely promise a favor because I am asking one. Our brother Heliodorus tells me that there are many parts of Scripture which you seek and cannot find.³⁴

Jerome's letter illustrates well a number of features involved in book exchange networks. He mentions two ways of acquiring books: either by borrowing a copy and returning it, or by asking a friend to make and send copies.³⁵ He also observes the principle of reciprocity, requesting a number of books from Florentius, while also promising that he will make copies of anything in his library that Florentius may not already have. The people in the network also have some impression about what their friends may and may not possess. Jerome learned from another associate (Heliodorus) that Florentius still needs certain books of Scripture, despite the fact that he has a diversity of other books in his library. Furthermore, Jerome acknowledges the "burden" (*grave*) that making such requests could impose. In Jerome's case, however, he has a number of young apprentices (*alumnos*) in his service who will do the work for him; and he assumes that Florentius is served by a copyist (*librarius*) as well.

The scribal note in Codex VI makes good sense in the context of such book-trading networks. Like Jerome, the scribe of Codex VI is someone

³³ Augustine, *Ep.* 31.7–8; *P. Oxy.* 2192; *P. Oxy.* 4365; Jerome, *Ep.* 10.3; Crum, *et al.* 1926: II 92, 254, no. 381 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 381).

³⁴ Jerome, *Ep.* 5.2 (tr. *NPNF*², VI.7, modified according to Latin text in Migne, *PL* 22, cols. 336–7); see. Cain 2009: 22, 41, 213.

³⁵ Earlier in the letter, Jerome communicates a message from his friend Paul, saying that when Florentius sees Rufinus, he should ask him to return Paul's copy of Tertullian.

who has received many books, and he assumes that the same is the case with his addressees. He also knows that his addressees may already have acquired certain texts, thus acknowledging that he is not their only supplier.

The wish list that Jerome attached to his letter (*breue subditus*) may also give us a glimpse into the kind of planning that went into Codex VI. The recipients of the Codex may well have sent the scribe such a list, which constituted the original plan for the contents of the codex, comprising what is now texts 1–6 and 8, before the decision was made to augment it with the short *Prayer of Thanksgiving*. In a way unexpected of a hired hand, the scribe of Codex VI exhibits the personal authority to add a text to the recipients' original request, as both a fitting appendix to the *Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth*,³⁶ and at the same time as a sample of the many other texts he has received through his network, and which he believes the recipients may also want if they have not already gotten them through other channels (maybe even from the same source from which he himself had procured them).

Furthermore, an interesting and important feature of the scribal note that has been largely overlooked is the fact that the scribe is concerned that he might place a “burden” on the recipients:

I hesitate to copy these for you since they may have come to you, and the matter may burden you (ⲡⲉⲱⲃⲃ ⲡⲉⲓⲥⲉ ⲛⲏⲧⲏ).³⁷

But how would sending more texts to the recipients “burden” them? As we saw from Jerome’s letter, he was well aware of the burden that a request for copies could impose. But in the case of Codex VI’s recipients, the labor of copying does not seem to be the problem, for the scribe says that he himself would copy the other texts for them. So how can the burden mentioned in the note be explained? We would like to suggest two possible, and rather different, explanations:

- 1) The recipients might feel indebted to the scribe and obliged to reciprocate by copying many texts and sending them back. Even if they did not have to copy a “great many texts,” this kind of work might be considered a burden. In addition, taking the time to actually read through “a great many texts,” especially unsolicited ones, may also have been considered a burden even for people who loved reading books.³⁸

³⁶ See Williams and Jenott 2006: 1043–4. ³⁷ VI,7a: 65.11–13.

³⁸ Thus Augustine writes to Paulinus and Therasia, “I have sent to your Holiness and Charity three books . . . knowing from the ardor of your desire, I am sure that you will not shrink from the labor of reading them (*laborem legendi*).” *Ep.* 31.7 (AD 396) (Migne, *PL* 33:125; tr. Parsons 1964: 116).

- 2) The “burden” mentioned in the note could also be understood in light of the increasing attempts by abbots and church authorities to censor the reading practices of monks and control the acquisition and distribution of texts. The phrase $\pi\epsilon\omega\beta \pi\epsilon\tau\iota\varsigma \eta\eta\tau\tau\iota$, which could be translated as “the matter may burden you,” can also be translated as “the matter may cause you trouble.”³⁹ In the atmosphere of censorship created by such writings as Athanasius’ 39th *Festal Letter* of 367, which was distributed among the monasteries of Egypt, by Shenoute’s *Canon* 5, and Archbishop Dioscorus’ *Letter to Shenoute* in the 440s, monks who had their own books or who were responsible for managing a monastic library could very well have found themselves “in trouble” if they received texts which were regarded as illicit reading materials by their superiors. As we saw in Shenoute’s *Canon* 5, the archimandrite was adamant that all books and letters had to be cleared by the Elder before being brought into the monastery, due to the danger posed by certain texts.

Whichever way we choose to interpret the scribal note as a whole, there is no doubt that we are witnessing a network of literary exchange. What is less clear is whether this network should be regarded as completely legitimate, or whether we are witnessing an “underground” activity trying to pass under the radar of the monastic authorities.

In summary, the relationship between the scribe and the recipients of Codex VI was probably not a commercial one, for the scribe would hardly have changed the planned contents of a commissioned book and then proceeded to write an explanation into the codex itself. As for the geographical distance and social relationship between scribe and recipients, there are several possibilities, but one option that should be kept in mind is that they are people residing in different monasteries within the same monastic federation, as would be the case in the Pachomian organization.

Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, the few texts we have which were actually written by the scribes of the Nag Hammadi Codices themselves, namely the colophons, are replete with terminology and formulaic requests commonly used by Egyptian monks: a “son” who copies a book for “the fatherhood,” blesses his father, and asks for a blessing in return; an “athlete” who writes to “the perfect”; a request to be remembered in the prayers of the “brothers”; and

³⁹ See Crum 1939: 712a.

a blessing of peace upon “the holy ones and the spirituals.” We have seen that the original owner of Codex VII may well have been the “father” of a monastic community, and that the social context underlying the obscure scribal note in Codex VI can be illuminated along the lines of the kind of book-exchange networks which we know fourth-century ascetics participated in. Such conclusions regarding the ownership of the codices are particularly interesting when we also take into consideration Codex Papyrus Berolinensis 8502. An inscription on the leather cover of this codex, which includes two texts that are also found in the Nag Hammadi Codices, identifies it as the property of Abbot Zacharias.⁴⁰

In discussing the community – or communities – who owned the Nag Hammadi Codices, one problem is to decide how representative these codices are of the reading habits and theology of those who read them. We see no reason to believe, as has often been implicitly assumed in Nag Hammadi scholarship, that the owners of these codices read only texts like these. As Roger Bagnall has rightly pointed out, “a text, or even a whole library of texts, does not make a sect or a community.”⁴¹ Bagnall’s point should not of course lead us to believe that there was no community that owned these books, but rather that we cannot discover or reconstruct its character based on the contents of these codices alone, as some scholars have attempted.⁴² On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that they also read canonical Scripture. Not only is this suggested by the Scriptural citations and allusions we find throughout the Nag Hammadi texts, which would make no sense without a knowledge of Scripture, but also by the cartonnage evidence. For in the cover of Codex VII fragments of Genesis in Sahidic were discovered, from a codex that looks very similar in style to the Nag Hammadi Codices themselves. Moreover, in one of the monastic letters from the cartonnage of the same cover, a monk named Daniel uses a fitting quotation from Hebrews to encourage “his beloved father” Aphrodisios.

Indeed, monasteries in Upper Egypt in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, such as those of the Pachomian federation, would have had the means of producing books like the Nag Hammadi Codices and are likely to have had inhabitants with sufficient interest in their highly complex theological contents to bother producing them in the first place. Palladius tells us that by the end of the fourth century, if not earlier, Pachomian

⁴⁰ Krutzsch and Poethke 1984: 39. The codex contains the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ*, and an *Act of Peter*.

⁴¹ Bagnall 1993: 304. ⁴² E.g., Logan 2006.

monks were producing books in a workshop dedicated to this purpose (*kalligraphēion*), and books, copying, and writing are mentioned throughout the Pachomians' own literature.⁴³ It is not necessary to imagine that such a workshop consisted of anything more than a small-scale operation managed by one or more literate monks trained in quire construction, copying, and binding.⁴⁴ Given the high value that Pachomian monks placed upon reading and writing,⁴⁵ it is to be expected that books would have been produced in more than one of their monasteries – maybe even in all of them. In fact, one explanation for the presence of distinct sub-groups within the Nag Hammadi collection as a whole may be that the codices were produced in different monasteries within the same monastic federation.⁴⁶ Such a scenario would also explain the scribal note in Codex VI as a communication between fellow monks in different monasteries, or between monks who belonged to the

⁴³ Palladius, *Hist. laus.* 32 (Butler 1967: 96). According to the *Life of Pachomius*, writing and copying were undertaken by monks in the earliest generation of the federation. Pachomius himself recorded his monastic Rule (SBo 27; G¹ 32), composed a book of his spiritual writings (G¹ 99), and wrote letters, sometimes with cryptographic formulas (G¹ 54, 99; see Quecke 1975). Some brothers wrote down many of Pachomius' interpretations of Scripture (G¹ 99), and the Great Steward at Pbow kept detailed records of all the monasteries' labor in the so-called "Book of the Stewards" (SBo 71; G¹ 59, 83). Even if these stories were anachronistic fabrications retrojected onto the earliest generation of the movement, it would nevertheless be hard to imagine that Pachomians were not engaged in writing and copying by the second half of the fourth century, closer to the time when the Nag Hammadi Codices were produced.

⁴⁴ When speaking of a *kalligraphēion*, or *scriptorium*, in fourth- and fifth-century monasteries, we agree with Parker (2010: 54) that "they were not places of mass production as we would understand it today." See also Gamble 1995: 120–2. See similarly, Haines-Eitzen 2000: 77–104, where it is maintained that books were predominately disseminated among Christians of the second and third centuries through "private" scribal networks, i.e., individuals living in different locations who borrowed and copied books from each other, rather than through the sort of routinized *scriptoria* which developed in the Middle Ages. Yet she also finds evidence in the fourth century of small groups of scribes collaborating in book production, as exemplified in her detailed discussion of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex (see esp. 101–2).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., *Praec.* 139 (Boon 1932: 49–50; tr. Veilleux 1980–1982: II 166); See Larsen's contribution to this volume, for broader discussion of monastic education.

⁴⁶ In contrast, Khosroyev 1995a: 67 argues that a Pachomian provenance is less likely because of the different codicological sub-groups. However, his argument seems to tacitly assume that all Pachomian monks would have used the same methods of quire production and book binding. This is probably not a safe assumption given the number and diversity of monasteries in the federation already in existence by the death of Pachomius in 346. The style of a book would presumably depend not only on the skill of the book-maker, but also, and perhaps usually, on the book's intended purpose. Thus a monk named Abraham who was engaged in making books at the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes asks the book's recipient to decide "what kind of book" (ναῦν βιβλῶν) he would like his text copied into. See Crum, *et al.* 1926: II 93, 255, no. 387 (= *Mon.Epiph.* 387). The evidence of different binding techniques found among the Nag Hammadi Codices does not, therefore, necessarily lead to the conclusion that they were produced in different workshops or by persons who had no relationship with one another.

same monastery but resided in different locations, including the caves in the nearby cliffs.

Although the possibility of a Pachomian provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices has often been proposed in previous scholarship, it has seldom been taken into consideration in interpretations of the Nag Hammadi texts themselves. While such an endeavor is outside the scope of the present article, we will, as an experiment, show what it might entail in an interpretation of a cryptic scribal note that has long puzzled scholars. Again we are looking at the work of the scribe of Codex VII (Figure 14.5), the one who referred to his “father” and “the fatherhood” in the book’s closing colophon. In the space between the end of the *Teachings of Silvanus* (VII,4) and the beginning of the *Three Steles of Seth* (VII,5), the scribe placed the following:⁴⁷

— — — — —
 ϕ ϕ ιχθς θαγμα ηηη
 ϕ αμηχανον Ϸ τ γ
 — — — — —

The words ιχθς θαγμα αμηχανον are easily understood as “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior,”⁴⁸ extraordinary wonder,” but the other characters are more obscure and must be deciphered. As is well known, Pachomius himself used the various letters of the alphabet as coded abbreviations in his letters.⁴⁹ For a long time an enigma, these codes have now been convincingly decoded by Christoph Joest.⁵⁰ While we cannot know for certain that Codex VII was produced for a Pachomian “father,” and while one could imagine a number of different interpretations of this note, deciphering it through Pachomius’ system as decoded by Joest actually turns out to make good sense. What we get from such a reading is a triple reference to “light” (ϕ for φως, and thus a Trinitarian reference), a triple reference to the “resurrection” (η), and the statement, “Therefore (Ϸ) the Son (γ[ιος]) was Crucified” (with τ for σταυρογ) – an interpretation which arguably resonates with some of the theological themes found in the Codex. While this interpretation is in no way definitive, it is at least one way the note could have made sense to a Pachomian

⁴⁷ NHC VII, 4: 117.8–9.

⁴⁸ The acrostic ιχθς is also found in the colophon following the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (a.k.a. the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*). See *Gos. Eg.* III 69.6–17 (Böhlig and Wisse 1975: 166).

⁴⁹ These secret codes are also mentioned in Pachomius’ *Vita*, which says that they were a “secret spiritual language” that would be understood and used by the fathers of the Pachomian monasteries, since they were “spiritual men” (G¹ 99).

⁵⁰ Joest 1999; Joest 2002.

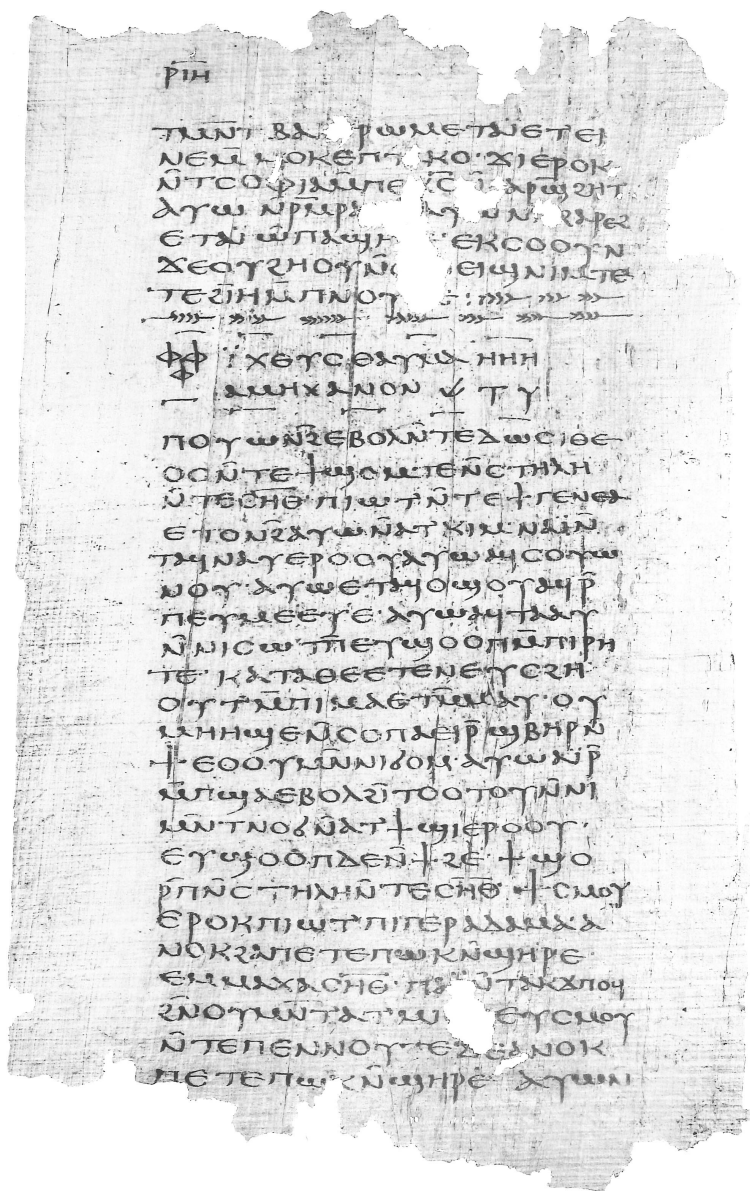


Figure 14.5 Colophon – Nag Hammadi Codex VII 118

reader familiar with the cryptography used by Pachomius and his monastic fathers. Whichever way one chooses to interpret it, however, it is not difficult to agree with Michael Williams that “the note as a whole seems understandable as the scribe’s comment on the mysteries about Christ

conveyed by the first four tractates of the codex, and as a reverent transition to the book's concluding doxology."⁵¹

We will end this brief examination of the colophons of the Nag Hammadi Codices with a short look at an intriguing one from Nag Hammadi Codex III, where the scribe, after having given the title of the text he has just copied, "the Gospel of the Egyptians, the secret holy divinely written book,"⁵² asks for blessings for the work he has done, and even mentions his name – or rather names:

Grace, intelligence, perception, and prudence be with him who copied it – Eugnostos the affectionate in the Spirit, in the flesh my name is Goggesos – and with my fellow lights in incorruptibility.⁵³

A notable aspect of the colophon is its reference to the scribe having two different names, a spiritual and a fleshly one. He is called Eugnostos "in the spirit" (ἐμπνεῖν), and Goggesos "in the flesh" (ἐντσαρξ). The idea of fleshly and spiritual names is not unprecedented in early monastic literature. Already in the letters of Antony we find such references, as for instance, when he tells his monastic children that "there is no need to bless, nor to mention, your transient names in the flesh."⁵⁴

In the colophons of the Nag Hammadi Codices we get glimpses of a communal culture of book production and exchange, with references to "brothers," "spirituals," and "the perfect," as well as to superiors as intended recipients and readers of the books. Together with the evidence we have of scribal collaboration in the Nag Hammadi Codices, we get a sense, however vague, of a community that valued the production and reading of books very highly indeed. Did the scribe Goggesos/Eugnostos and his "fellow lights in incorruptibility" belong to the same monastic community as the "spirituals" mentioned in the colophon of Codex II or the "fatherhood" who owned Codex VII? And could they have been Pachomians? While it is impossible to answer these questions definitively, we see little reason to dismiss the possibility out of hand. Further research will hopefully contribute to an evaluation of its probability. For now, we are content to conclude that they were at least monks.

⁵¹ Williams 1995: 19.

⁵² *Gos. Eg.* III 69.6–8: πεγαγγελιον ἡρῆικημε τβιβλος ἡσραῖ ἡνοῦτε τῇερα εἰρηπ (Böhlig and Wisse 1975: 166).

⁵³ *Gos. Eg.* III 69.8–13: τεχαρις τσῦνρεσις τεςωνσις τεφρονησις ἡνπερςζητς· ευγνωστος παγαπητικός ἐμπνεῖν ἐντσαρξ· παρην πε γογγεσσος ἡνναδῶβρογοειν ἐνογαφθαρσια (Böhlig and Wisse 1975: 166).

⁵⁴ Antony, *Ep.* VI.78 (Rubenson 1995: 221); see similarly *Ep.* III.5–6 and V.1.

15 | Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: Approaching Arabic Recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

JASON ZABOROWSKI

Many will recognize the primary title of this chapter, borrowed from the title of Dimitri Gutas' book describing the "Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsīd Society (second to fourth/eighth to tenth centuries)."¹ At the end of the 1990s Dimitri Gutas' book brought to a broader academic audience the knowledge held by many Arabists and Islamicists, that the Baghdad Caliphate of the eighth century was the center of a new cultural blossoming. Baghdad and the Arabic language provided the fertile ground for cultivating a "hybrid civilization."² Never before had the Persian civilization of the East been brought into common cause with the Graeco-Roman West – the remains of both empires nourishing a cultural florescence under the aegis of Arabic Islamic government, and the Arabic language. My aim is to understand the Arabic recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (AP) within the frame of the largest-scale cultural movements of Arabic Islamic society, those in the 'Abbasid period from AD 762 to 1258. This framework reminds us that to approach Arabic recensions of the AP is to participate in an ongoing renaissance activity, rehearsing the 1400-year cycle of intellectual borrowings between West and East. Dimitri Gutas was aware of this cycle in writing his book, which he saw as another installment in the scholarship stretching from the 1830s, when Western Orientalists consciously called for "a collection [to] be made of the references to Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Persian translations of Greek authors, an accurate account of which we are lacking to this day."³ The study of the Arabic recensions of the AP has thus a context within the vision of modern Orientalism for deciphering the transmission of Greek thought into Oriental cultures. Gutas' book *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* addresses in many ways how the great renaissance of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement impacted (and in some ways

¹ Gutas 1998, whose book reiterates the title of Richard Walzer's contribution to the *Oriental Studies* Series: Walzer 1962.

² To borrow the parlance of Arthur Goldschmidt 2006: 109.

³ Gutas 1998: xiii, citing the minutes of the Royal Society of Sciences meeting in Göttingen in 1830.

failed to impact)⁴ education and the production of knowledge within the Islamic civilization; similarly, this chapter will chart ways to understand how the Arabic translation of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* affected monastic education among Arabic-speaking Christians. The chapter demonstrates that Christian Arabic translators subtly molded their renditions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* to fit the pedagogical needs of living under Islamic rule, providing ways for their audience to express traditional Christian wisdom in Qur'anic idioms and concepts.

Since the 1830s the analysis of the Classical Arabic appropriation of Greek literature has been undertaken primarily by German- and (to a lesser extent) English-speaking scholars such as Gutas,⁵ but the Francophones have studied almost exclusively the Arabic AP. Most important are the works of Joseph-Marie Sauget and Jean Mansour. Samuel Rubenson has recently discussed these works by Sauget and Mansour, calling attention to their analysis of Arabic manuscripts of the AP, which they carried out during the 1970s and 80s.⁶ Rubenson's "Status Questionis," as he calls it, provides a starting point for us to extend the work Mansour and Sauget produced four decades ago. Their work even prefigures the methods employed by the research program "Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia*" today.⁷

Jean Mansour's unpublished doctoral thesis in 1972 expressed the need for a program, such as Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia*, to address the questions about the Arabic recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, stating that, in spite of recent research, the philological problems of the *Apophthegmata* have not yet been solved.⁸ Echoing the ideas of René Draguet decades earlier,⁹ Mansour claimed that only a complete edition of the Greek text and the versions in the ancient languages can provide us with a coherent and definitive synthesis.¹⁰ Mansour began to remedy the problem

⁴ See especially part II of Gutas 1998. ⁵ Gutas 1975.

⁶ Rubenson 2011a; see especially pp. 306, n. 7, and 310, which refer to breakthroughs of Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997 and 2002.

⁷ Please see this volume's Introduction for the Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia* project at Lund University.

⁸ "Malgré les recherches entreprises, le problème philologique des Apophthegmes n'est donc pas encore résolu". Mansour 1972: xlv.

⁹ Draguet 1950: 25.

¹⁰ "Seule l'édition complète du texte grec et des versions en langues anciennes permettrait l'éclosion d'une synthèse cohérente et définitive" Mansour 1972: xlvi. The desideratum of a systematic edition of the Greek manuscript tradition has often been reiterated with respect to the Arabic tradition, and considered to be a barrier to understanding the Arabic recensions of Christian wisdom literature. See also Sauget 1977: 52–3, where Sauget follows Draguet's scholarship in noting, "Il ne saurait être question de soumettre ce court texte arabe à un examen [53] complet, sans l'appui d'une édition critique des diverses recensions grecques."

of understanding the Arabic recensions of the *AP* by transcribing the tenth-century Arabic manuscript Strasbourg 4225, a lengthy florilegium of sixteen different wisdom texts from the pre-Islamic patristic and monastic milieux that includes renditions of the *AP* side by side with sayings of John Chrysostom, Barsanuphius, Ephrem the Syrian, and St. Basil, as well as legends related to Pontius Pilate, St. Martinien, John Climacus, and others. Contemporary with Mansour, Joseph-Marie Sauget also responded to the desideratum that Draguet had expressed with regard to Christian wisdom literature – that critical editions of the different collections were necessary foundations for research – by rigorously investigating the Arabic collections. Throughout his lifetime Sauget (1926–1988), as the Scriptor of the Bibliothèque Vaticane, collected and analyzed Arabic manuscripts of liturgical and homiletical genres, publishing detailed descriptions and analytical tables comparing parallel texts, especially of the *AP*.

The following remarks will survey the accomplishments of Mansour and Sauget, exhibit some of my initial observations about Arabic renditions of the *Apophthegmata*, and consider the Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia* program's significance for the fields of Oriental studies in the scope of the past two centuries. Overall, this study of Arabic recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* affirms Britt Dahlman's reference to educational strategies in the revision of monastic texts: as she says, "ancient pedagogical practice promoted the ability to re-shape and re-formulate a text to 'aptly' address a new historical circumstance, moment, or setting."¹¹ Two seemingly contradictory qualities of some Arabic translations show a concern for pedagogy: a) a tendency to translate Greek phrases literally, and yet; b) subtle adaptations (or, "revisions," using Dahlman's word) of Hellenistic ethical vocabulary to the Qur'anic milieu. Christian Arabic translator(s) accomplished more than a translation of the Greek words of the apophthegms by striving to adapt Hellenistic concepts such as *virtue* (in particular) to the Qur'anic context of its audience, seeking both to preserve the integrity of the received tradition and to teach, or interpret, it meaningfully to students of the Arabic culture.

Jean Mansour (1928–2006)

Jean Mansour¹² seems to have produced only one work of scholarship before devoting his life to ecclesiastical service, but the research he did

¹¹ See Dahlman, this volume, and Larsen 2006a, 2013a.

¹² I am grateful to Fr. Ugo Zanetti for confirming the identity of Jean Mansour and providing knowledge about Joseph-Marie Sauget. Jean Mansour S.M.S.P., b. July 27, 1928

constitutes a significant contribution to the study of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in Arabic. His doctoral dissertation at Strasbourg produced the only printed critical edition of an Arabic collection of the AP. Mansour supplements the Arabic edition of the manuscript with his own brief descriptions of the contents, as well as indices of Biblical allusions and loanwords: most importantly, he includes identification tables (created by J.-M. Sauget a decade earlier)¹³ that assign unit numbers to the segments of text and correlate them with the other reference collections in the Greek. Mansour's decision to edit this manuscript for his 1972 dissertation naturally followed the currents of AP scholarship of that time, responding to Joseph-Marie Sauget's remark about the Strasbourg manuscript a decade before: that it had enough original features compared with the Greek systematic collection reconstituted by Guy to merit a special study.¹⁴

The Strasbourg 4225 manuscript originates from St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, in the year 288 AH (AD 900/901).¹⁵ The early date of the MS and its connection to a monastery that has served as a repository of *apophthegmata* MSS in other languages render the text worthy of Mansour's attention, as well as ours.

Besides providing a fairly reliable transcription of the Strasbourg 4225 manuscript, Mansour started an effective argument about the text's relation to Greek and Syriac. He also established the most important question about the Arabic corpus of the AP, namely its form, because it appears in a florilegium. To borrow a word from Rubenson, those transmitting the AP tradition have *apophthegmatized* other sayings and stories. Such a reception of the AP tradition in Arabic is not at all surprising, but attention to this form of the texts may lead us to breakthroughs in our understanding of both the transmission of the AP and its wider impact on Arabic culture.

Mansour is correct in arguing that the key to understanding the origins of the Strasbourg 4225 manuscript, and the Arabic recensions of the AP broadly, is to "determine the language of [the text's] immediate model."

d. November 17, 2006. Mansour was ordained a priest on June 29, 1952; on August 19, 1980, he was elevated to Melkite Archbishop of Antioch and Apamea. See www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bmansour.html; link accessed on April 30, 2014.

¹³ Sauget 1964: 501–9. See also Mansour 1972: 106, n. 1.

¹⁴ "Le classement de celles-ci offre assez de caractéristiques propres par rapport à la collection systématique grecque normale reconstituée récemment par J.-C. Guy, pour mériter une étude spéciale," Sauget 1964: 486.

¹⁵ It was acquired in modern times by a Dr. Reinhardt, "Dragoman am deutschen Generalkonsulat [in Cairo], für die Strassburger Bibliothek erworben." See Oestrup 1897: 453, n. 4. Mansour could not verify this handwritten note allegedly observed by Oestrup (alt., Østrup) during the latter's visit to Strasbourg in 1896–7. See Mansour 1972: 19.

The problem is more complex than merely identifying Syriacisms in the text.¹⁶ Mansour argues, “traces of ‘syriacisms’ most certainly appear in our manuscript. However, they are much less noticeable than the ‘hellenisms’, by far predominant in the vocabulary, as well as in the expressions and turns of phrase.”¹⁷ Mansour illustrates the “great number” of phrases that he claims are best “understood in the light of the corresponding Greek renditions.”¹⁸ My analysis of the Arabic manuscript confirms his observations.¹⁹ Moreover, Christian Arabic already by the tenth century had adopted Syriac parlance, such that syriacisms in the text are insufficient evidence to indicate that the Arabic was a translation from the Syriac, rather than directly from Greek. And linguistically speaking, the concept *directly from* the Greek must be nuanced so that we can expand our imagination to hypothesize a translator who is perhaps a trilingual Syriac speaker directly translating a Greek text into Arabic, with interference from three languages of expression. That is the cultural milieu even of John of Damascus (d. 750) a century and a half prior to the drafting of Strasbourg 4225, and St. Catherine’s was a monastery likely throughout history to have a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual staff.²⁰ In a moment I will raise textual examples relevant to bi- and trilingualism, but for now I will summarily state that Mansour was convinced the Strasbourg 4225 MS was a transcription of a textual tradition that was translated directly from Greek.²¹

Knowing whether this particular Arabic recension is dependent on a Syriac intermediary is actually just a facet of my research interest: the whole gem is to appreciate the brilliance of inter-cultural appropriation of

¹⁶ Mansour 1972: 27. Mansour crafts his rebuttal to Ignace Abdo Khalifé S.J.’s (1914–1998) claims about a Syriac intermediary to Strasbourg 4225, found in Khalifé 1949–50.

¹⁷ Mansour 1972: 28. My translation from the French here and below.

¹⁸ Mansour 1972: 30. In this section Mansour follows Oestrup’s argument and examples.

¹⁹ I am preparing a publication of the findings of my research on the linguistic characteristics of this manuscript (an MS that Mansour surveys in his dissertation), which shows overwhelming consonance between the Greek and Arabic renditions of apophthegms.

²⁰ Consider the remarks of the Piacenza Pilgrim in the sixth century AD: “*monasterium . . . circumdatum muris munitis, in quo sunt tres abbates scientes linguas, hoc est, latinas et graecas, syriacas et aegyptiacas et bessas, uel multi interpretes singularum linguarum.*” Quoted, from the Latin edition (§37), by Paul Peeters in Peeters 1959: 140.

²¹ Mansour 1972: 32. Mansour concludes from the language of the colophons that the text is most likely a transcription of an earlier translation, rather than an original translation. He considers the scribe’s use of the phrase كُتِبَ to be more of a synonym for نُسَخَ, rather than نقلَ, or فُسِّرَ, which more specifically connote “translation.” Mansour also notes that the textual errors are more common to a copyist’s fatigue than a careless translator. See p. 24, and for the Arabic, p. 317 (colophon: MS f. 226”, lines 8–18). My forthcoming research provides more supportive evidence that the manuscript is copied from an Arabic *Vorlage*, rather than translated.

the *apophthegmata*. As Mansour observed, “The Christian Arabs of the period appeared this way, wholly permeated by the preceding cultures [in their languages]. The phenomenon ought not be surprising; for centuries these cultures have conveyed the Christian message, in its doctrinal as well as moral, liturgical and pastoral expressions.”²² Mansour’s dissertation helps readers to appreciate the ways the translators used Arabic as a conduit for channeling Greek thought into Arabic culture by creating a great florilegium of wisdom that would otherwise be lost in the course of language change.

Joseph-Marie Sauget (1926–1988)

As with virtually all of the work on the Arabic collections, Joseph-Marie Sauget had paved the way for Mansour by painstakingly identifying the specific apophthegms contained in the Strasbourg 4225 text and bringing to light the structures of many Christian Arabic manuscripts related to the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. His long career as the Scriptor of the Bibliothèque Vaticane afforded him access to many manuscripts that he analyzed in articles that he published from the 1960s onward, culminating in his 1987 CSCO volume focused on MS Paris Arabic 253 – proving that the manuscript was the structural nucleus of one coherent tradition of Arabic AP manuscripts. His work did not provide any editions of the manuscripts he studied: rather, he established the structures and parallels between texts, being one of the more prescient scholars who perhaps could foresee that his foundations would help researchers avoid the mistakes of other editors such as Budge and Bedjan in the Syriac tradition, who produced editions with insufficient critical source awareness.²³ The same could be said for the Greek editions, for that matter.²⁴ Thanks to Sauget, at least the approach roads to Arabic recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* are not blocked by any unsatisfactory editions from less suitable, unverifiable, or poorly understood sources. It is on Sauget’s structural tables that Mansour’s dissertation rests, adopting Sauget’s unit numbering.

²² Mansour 1972: 32.

²³ For a brief assessment of the Syriac editions, see Holmberg 2013: 35–6. See also Draguet 1978a: 46–7, who notes that Bedjan’s edition does not reference the MS foliation or the correlations between manuscripts that it portrays. See also Rubenson 2011a: 306–8.

²⁴ See Rubenson 2011a: 306; see also Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997; Faraggiana di Sarzana 2002.

Like all *AP* studies, Sauget's were attentive to the Greek, especially considering that his work began to appear in the same time period as the publication of Jean-Claude Guy's (d. 1986) editions of the Greek Systematic collection.²⁵ In the 1960s and 70s Sauget's research uncovered evidence in the manuscript tradition, consonant with Mansour's analysis, that pointed to direct links between the Greek and Arabic traditions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. These Graeco-Arabic links are most clearly expressed in the colophon of one of the MSS belonging to the Paris Arabic 253 cluster: Paris Arabic 276, perhaps written in the eleventh century, claims to have been:

translated from the Greek language into the Arabic by the Holy Father and
Virtuous Scholar Aba Antony, elder monk of the Monastery of our Holy
Father Saint Simeon the Thaumaturge.²⁶

مما عني بنقلة من اللغة اليونانية الى العربية الاب القديس والمعلم الفاضل ابا انطوني الشيخ
الراهب بدير القديس ابينا ماري سمعان العجائبي.

Sauget's analysis focused on its structure, noticing that the actual assortment of texts "proves itself to be of quite great use for the history of the composition and transmission of the ascetico-monastic collections of edification in the diverse Byzantine and Oriental traditions."²⁷

Sauget's analysis approached, but usually stopped short of, decisive claims about the translational roots of the Arabic *AP* because he recognized the need for reliable philological analysis of the texts.²⁸ He set out to establish the texts by describing them on the structural level,²⁹ noting

²⁵ See Sauget's remarks on utilizing Guy's research in Sauget 1962: 402–3 referring to Guy 1962.

²⁶ Sauget 1969: 364. My translation of Sauget here and below. Arabic transcribed directly from Sauget's transcription; I have not yet accessed this manuscript. Sauget claims that the same translator, Antony, is demonstrably the author of Vatican Arabic 436 (see Sauget 1969: 366). In Sauget's 1987 CSCO study of Par.Ar. 253, he claims that the analysis of Arabic *Paterika* "jusqu'à présent" is limited to Par.Ar. 276 and Sin.Ar. 547: thus, he considered the observations of this 1969 article basically unsurpassed by any research in the intervening twenty years. See Sauget 1987b: 10.

²⁷ Sauget 1969: 371.

²⁸ His analysis of Paris Arabic 253 uses the parlance of "compilateur arabe" more frequently than "traducteur arabe." Sauget's attention to onomastics reveals a mixed picture of resemblances between the Arabic (of Par. Ar. 253) and the Syriac and Greek. One characteristic example is that of the Arabic rendition of Abraham, clearly not dependent on the Syriac *Abraham*, closer to the Greek, 'Abraam: ابرامي. Sauget 1987b: 68.

²⁹ The method he attributed to René Draguet, "si clairement exposée dans les lignes précédentes que nous nous proposons d'aborder et de présenter l'analyse de la structure d'un type caractéristique de *Paterikon* contenu dans la première partie du ms. *Paris arabe 253*, en la comparant avec les témoins parallèles." Sauget 1987b: 2. Sauget also quotes from Draguet 1950: 26–7.

structural parallels, in comparison with the Greek reference collections and the Syriac recensions of 'Enānīšō'. But he realized that reading the texts individually and carefully was indispensable for understanding the relations between texts. He saw this careful content analysis as the next step, for which this essay is a prolegomenon.

AP Recensions in Arabic

Sauget's comparisons have proven that the Paris Arabic 253 (Par. Ar. 253) MS (and its family of related manuscripts) has a structural relationship to the early eighth-century Syriac compilation of the *AP* and other monastic texts. It is worth emphasizing that the known Arabic manuscripts containing the *AP* are composite texts that intersperse the apophthegms among other ascetic wisdom stories and sayings. Or, to once again employ Rubenson's convenient term, the Arabic manuscripts *apophthegmatize* a broader grouping of ascetic vignettes. Thus, Sauget's task of structural analysis untangled the parts of the Par. Ar. 253 archetype. In his words, they break down into quite distinct, different parts.³⁰ The first segment of Par. Ar. 253 is structured alphabetically, but according to him, there is a double composition in the interior of the chapters grouped under the same letter.³¹ Under each letter of the alphabet the same names are repeated, but in a somewhat different order, and containing different selections of apophthegms. Sauget discovered that the structure and selections of the Greek alphabetical collections provided a master structure, and that this master structure also contained "at the interior of [each] collection, dedicated to a specific elder," a newly alphabetized collection of 'Enānīšō's Syriac systematic collection. As Sauget notes, the task of the compiler was simple: to regroup the pieces of the systematic 'Enānīšō' collection within the alphabetico-anonymous structure.³² Sauget also noticed that the reconstituted shuffling of the two structures resulted in interference between the individual apophthegms in each collection.³³ Sauget considered this discovery "incontestably the most important contribution of [his study] to the history of the transmission of the collections

³⁰ Sauget 1987b: 10: "décomposer en diverses parties bien distinctes."

³¹ Sauget 1987b: 14: "une double composition à l'intérieur des chapitres d'une même lettre."

³² Sauget 1987b: 19: "à l'intérieur des dossiers dédiés à un Vieillard déterminé."

³³ For example, see Sauget 1987b: 59, for the interpolation of Arsenius 38 with Bedjan 1897, I.247 and I.299.

of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in the Oriental versions.”³⁴ His tables seem to prove the points of connection on a structural level,³⁵ but he leaves for us the unanswered question of whether the Par. Ar. 253 represents the original translation stream from Syriac into Arabic, or if Par. Ar. 253 is an Arabist’s compilation of an earlier Arabicized translation of ‘Enānīšō’s Syriac.³⁶ Or to phrase the question another way, were the language and the structure translated at the same time and from the same source?

Furthermore, understanding the currents of transmission and intentionalities of the Arabic recensions’ new audiences requires attention to all of the satellite literature of the *AP*, especially the wisdom of Abba Isaiah of Scetis, the Lausaic History, and texts attributed to Evagrius under the name Abba Nilus, all of which are offered for the meditation of the monks, as Sauget says.³⁷ As Sauget confesses, in several cases, “[t]he criteria of selection, if they exist, still escape us.”³⁸

Textual Analysis

Preliminary Remarks on Strasbourg 4225 (AD 900/901)

An array of linguistic questions arise when we approach the more comprehensive phenomena of cultural reception and deliberate pedagogical redeployment of the *apophthegmata*. Turns of phrase are clues into the intentionality of translators and their audience, and where there may appear to be a loss in translation, there can also be a gain in meaning, as seems evident in the Arabic glosses that clearly show efforts to adhere to the Greek *ad litteram* (“literally”), along with a willingness to expand phrases to translate *ad sensum* (“according to the sense”).

The Arabic recension of Strasbourg 4225 at times provides theological and literary expansions as interpretations of the Greek parallels. For example, the Arabic adds theological and literary balance not found in the Coislin manuscripts for the *apophthegma* GN 592:32, regarding the acceptance of charity. Notice how the Arabic rendition balances Satan’s temptations with God’s beneficence.

³⁴ Sauget 1987b: 19.

³⁵ Sauget claims his parallel tables demonstrate “l’ordonnance des pièces dans chaque dossier nominatif de la collection arabe et leur ordre de succession progressive dans EN.” Sauget 1987b: 56.

³⁶ Sauget 1987b: 19. ³⁷ Sauget 1987b: 4: “sont . . . proposées à la méditation des moines.”

³⁸ Sauget 1987b: 61.

example a

Greek: GN 592:32³⁹

If a man gives you alms of his own free will and you are in need, then take it; but do not take it under any circumstances if you are not in need, for it could be that Satan is tempting you to take something you do not need.

Arabic: Strasbourg 4225, VII.29, f. 57^r, l.2–6

فانا عطاك انسان من قبل نفسه صدقة فخذ منه ان كنت محتاج لان الله هو الذي بعثه اليك: وان لم تكون محتاج فلا تقبل راسا لئلا يكون الامر من الشيطان اراد ان يجربك لتأخذ ما لا تحتاج اليه.

When a man of his own accord gives you charity, receive it from him if you are in need, **for God is the one sending it to you**, and if you are not in need, do not accept [it] whatsoever, so that it not be the bidding of Satan who wants to tempt you to receive what you do not need.⁴⁰

In the same GN 592 series the Arabic Strasbourg 4225 MS theologically glosses the endings of some of the apophthegms, invoking Islamic phraseology that invites further investigation. For instance, GN 592:50 ends with the assurance that confessing *logismous* (“thoughts”) even to another sinner is beneficial, because God will speak through the other sinner in the same manner as Balaam’s ass spoke. The Arabic recension is more elaborate than the Greek versions, clarifying the conditions of God’s agency through sinners and supplicants, and utilizing Qur’anic phraseology.

example b

Greek: GN 592:50⁴¹

... will give him an appropriate reply, even though the one who is being asked is unworthy and a sinner. //END//

Arabic: Strasbourg 4225, VII.49, f. 59^v, l.1–17

... وان كان ذلك الانسان خاطي ليس هو باهل ولكن منجل [=من اجل] تواضع الذي يسله فالله يجاوبه ان كان مستقيم.

³⁹ Texts retrieved from *Monastica* <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (=Wortley 2013: 413) and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>.

⁴⁰ Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the Arabic are my own.

⁴¹ Texts retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (=Wortley 2013: 421) and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>.

even though that man [hearing confession] is a sinner, it is not he alone [replying to you], but on account of the humility of the one who asked him, *God* replies to him, if he is upright.

Any Arabic speaker would recognize the term “upright” (*mustaqīm*-مستقيم), echoing the *fātihah*, the first surah of the Qur’an.⁴²

Other parlance natural to the Qur’ān is apparent in the Arabic recensions. On the one hand, the appearance of the familiar Qur’ānic invocation of the “mercy of God” (*rahmat-allah* – رحمة الله) would seem ordinary in translating the Greek *Apophthegmata*, but perhaps extraordinary when the term is augmenting what is found in the Greek.⁴³

example c

Greek	Arabic
GS XV.118b (=N 582b)	Strasb. 4225 VIII.134, f.84 r,l.18–19 – 84 v, l.1–2
Ἰδοὺ ποῖον ἀγαθὸν ἔστιν ἡ ὑπομονή, καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀπογινώσκειν ἑαυτῶν κἂν συμβῇ πολλάκις πεσεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς πολέμους καὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ πειρασμούς. Ἐλθόντος οὖν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ εἰς κατάνυξιν τοῦ λοιποῦ ἐκάθητο κλαίων τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ.	فانظروا يا احباي الى الصبر ما اشرفه. فلا يكون انسان يقطع رجاء ولا يابس من رحمة الله وان وقع في خطايا وقتال وبلايا. فلما رجع ذلك الاخ الى نفسه اخذ يبكي وينوح على خطاياه الذي سلفت منه.
See what a good thing patient endurance is and not despairing of oneself, even though it happens that we often fall in battles, sins and temptations. Experiencing sorrow for sin, in future the brother sat weeping for his sins.	Behold, my <u>beloved</u> , the perseverance that distinguished him; thus the man had not become severed from his hope, nor did he despair, <u>by the mercy of God</u> , even when he fell into sins, fights, and temptations! When that brother returned to himself, he began to weep and mourn over his sins which preceded him.

Another example demonstrates again how the Arabic rendition adds poetic symmetry not found in the Greek, as well as theological emphasis on the “mercy of God” (*rahmat-Allah*).

⁴² Surah 1:6: اهدنا الصراط المستقيم.

⁴³ For example, see the ending of Strasbourg 4225, VII.40, 58^r, لانه رحوم. In the following table the Greek and Arabic texts are retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (= Guy 1993–2005: 378) and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (= Guy 2004: 362–4). Translations are mine.

example d⁴⁴

Greek	Arabic
GS VII.47 (N~ 376)	Strasb. 4225 VIII.174, f.92 v, l.15–19
Ἔλεγε τις τῶν γερόντων περὶ Λαζάρου τοῦ πτωχοῦ ὅτι οὐχ εὐρίσκεται μίαν ἀρετὴν ποιήσας, πλὴν τοῦτο μόνον εὐρίσκομεν εἰς αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐδέποτε κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἐγόγγυσεν ὡς μὴ ποιούντος μετ' αὐτοῦ ἔλεος, ἀλλὰ μετ' εὐχαριστίας τὸν πόνον αὐτοῦ ἐβάσταζεν· διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Θεὸς προσελάβετο αὐτόν.	قال شيخ منجل العازر المسكين انا لم نجده عمل شيا من عمل الفضل الا هذا فقط انه لم يزمزم بثة على ذلك الغني حيث لم يرحمه. وكان شاكر الله على ما كان فيه. فمتجل هذا فقط رحمه الله.
One of the elders used to say of Lazarus the Poor that he is never found doing anything virtuous, except this alone we find in him: that he never complained against the Lord for not showing him mercy. Rather, with thanksgiving he bore his affliction. Thus God accepted him.	An elder said about Lazarus the Poor that we do not find him having done any virtuous deed except <u>this alone</u> , that he never complained about that rich man for not showing him mercy, and he was thanking God for what was his, on account of <u>this alone God showed him mercy.</u>

This example shows the Arabic pouring more meaning into the earlier Greek form to emphasize God's mercy and to stylistically balance the proverbial speech.

Style is important in the Greek renditions of *Apophthegmata*, and it seems to have been so for the Arabic translators as well. For GS X.77, the Greek and Arabic each has its own alliterative flair.

example e⁴⁵

Greek	Arabic
GS X.77 (=G Poemen.177)	Strasb. 4225 VIII.222, f.100 v, l.3–5
Εἶπε πάλιν· Πονηρία πονηρίαν οὐδαμῶς ἀναιρεῖ· ἀλλ' ἐάν τις σε κακοποιήσῃ, εὖ ποιήσῃς αὐτῷ ἵνα διὰ τῆς ἀγαθότητος ἀνέλῃς τὴν πονηρίαν.	وقال انبا بيمين الشر لا يطرد الشر. ولكن ان اسا اليك انسان فاحسن انت اليه لكيما باحسنك اليه تستاصل الشر.

⁴⁴ Greek and Arabic texts retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (= Guy 1993: 378) and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>. My translations of the Greek and the Arabic. The Arabic is more parallel to the edition of GS Guy than to the edition of GN.

⁴⁵ Greek and Arabic texts retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (= Guy 2003: 64) and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>. My translations of the Greek and the Arabic.

(cont.)

He also said: "Wickedness by no means expels wickedness; rather if someone does evil to you, do good unto him, so that through goodness you expel wickedness."	Abba Poemen said: "Wickedness does not expel wickedness, rather if someone does evil to you, do good unto him, so that through your goodness to him you will root out wickedness."
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Another apophthegm attributed to Abba Poemen also exhibits Arabic playful mnemonics:

example f⁴⁶

Arabic: Strasbourg 4225, VIII.219, f.100^r, l.12–15. (=GS X.72;
G Poemen.25)

قال انبا بيمين انسان يعلم ولا يعمل ما يعلم فهو يشبه الحنانة التي تستقي وتغسل كل احد ولا
تستطيع تنقي نفسها ولكنها ملا وسخ وقذر.

Anba Poemen said, "Someone who teaches and does not do what is taught resembles the spring that draws forth and cleanses each one, and is not able to purify itself, but it is full of filth and impurity."

Conclusions: Monastic *Paideia* and Oriental Studies

Dimitri Gutas' book, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, rests partially on the scholarship of his doctoral dissertation (1974), written more than twenty years earlier, at the same time as Mansour's edition of the Strasbourg 4225 Arabic manuscript of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (1972). Like Mansour's work, Gutas' dissertation was also an edition of an Arabic text: in fact, an Arabic text translating Greek wisdom sayings. Gutas' dissertation analyzed the Greek *gnomologia* translated into Arabic, an edition of which he published in 1975. When viewed in tandem, the translation of Greek *Apophthegmata Patrum* into Arabic and the translation of Greek *Gnomologia* of the Classical philosophers represent two different streams of culture flowing into two Arabic pools, or two different semantic houses (to follow Richard M. Frank's elaboration on Heidegger's metaphor).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Arabic text retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>.

⁴⁷ Frank 1996: 613. Frank invokes Heidegger's phrase, "die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins; in ihrer Behausung wohnt der Mensch," to explicate the challenge of deciphering intentionality when translating as an existential problem of bringing meaning into one house from another.

It would be surprising to see the *AP* and the Greek *Gnomologia* brought under the same dwelling in Arabic. On the one hand, the first places to look are obviously in different locations: to invoke Tertullian, “What has Baghdad to do with Jerusalem?” Of course there are devoted Christian philosophers involved in the philosophical movements of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, such as Yahya ibn ‘Adi (AD 893–974), but did their reading habits (or their spiritual practice) draw them into the orbit of the *AP*? Likewise, there is a natural intersection between the *Gnomologia* and the *AP* on the cultivation of ethical thinking. This ethical aspect of the *Gnomologia* is unquestionably what merited their being collated together with *hadith* and Qur’anic *adab* florilegia.⁴⁸ But the *AP* and the *Gnomologia* also diverge subtly in their moral language.

example g⁴⁹

Greek	Arabic	Syriac
GS VII.30 (=GN 297)	Strasb. 4225 VIII.162, f.91 r, l. 4-6	Bedjan VI.13a (Bedjan 1897: 510-11)
Εἶπε γέρων· Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ προκόπτομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐπιστάμεθα τὰ μέτρα ἑαυτῶν οὐδὲ ἔχομεν ὑπομονήν ἐν ᾧ ἀρχόμεθα ἔργῳ, ἀλλὰ ἀπόνως θέλομεν κτήσασθαι τὴν ἀρετήν.	قال شيخ منجل هذا ليس نفلح لانا ليس نعرف قدرنا ولا لانا صبر في كل امر نبدأ به. ونريد نقنتي <u>رضا</u> <u>الله</u> بغير تعب.	ܐܬܝܬܐ ܗܝܠܐ ܡܢ ܗܝܠܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܠܡܕܡܐ ܗܝܠܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ ܡܬܪܥܡܐ.
An elder said: “This is why we make no progress: we do not understand our own limits; we do not have patience in work we undertake, rather we want to generate virtue effortlessly.”	An elder said: “On account of this, we are not satisfied, because we do not know our ability, and we do not have patience in every work that we undertake, while we want to obtain <u>the favor of God</u> (<i>ridhâ</i> <i>allah</i>) without hardship.”	An old man used to say: “We do not advance because we do not know our capacity, and we have not sufficient patience in the work which we begin, and we wish <u>to possess virtues</u> <u>without working for them.</u> ”

⁴⁸ Gutas 1975: 459–61.

⁴⁹ Texts retrieved from *Monastica*: <https://monastica.ht.lu.se> (=Guy 1993: 358), <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>, and <https://monastica.ht.lu.se>. My translations, adapting Wortley 2013: 201 and Budge 1907: I 44.

(cont.)

αὐτὸν καὶ διδάσκει
 πᾶσας τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ
 τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Abba Jacob said:

“As a lamp in a dark
 bedchamber
 illuminates it, so too
 the fear of God when
 it enters into the heart,
 of a man, illuminates
 him, teaching him all
 the virtues and the
 commandments
 of God.”

Abba Jacob said:

“As a lamp that gleams
 in a dark house, is the
 fear of God: when it is
 established in the heart
 of someone it will
 enlighten him, teaching
 him all the
commandments
 of God.”

Abba Jacob used to say:

“As a lamp illuminates
 a chamber, so the fear of
 God, if it abides in the heart
 of a man, illuminates him,
 and teaches him all the
virtues and commandments
of God.”

Many examples could be raised from the *Gnomologia* collections that stand in contrast to the suppression of the word “virtues,” *aretas*, in Arabic translation of the *AP*. One example may be adequate for illustration:

Arabic: Pythagoras #25. Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature*, p. 75.
 (Translation Gutas)

Ignorance of the virtues is tantamount to death.

والجهل بالفضائل > عدل الموت.

Suffice it to say, there are many parallel problems for which Gutas has suggested clear procedural solutions that serve as foundations for the research that I am conducting on other Arabic mss. of the *AP*. Like Sauget, Gutas reminds his readers that the “starting point for . . . an investigation” of the transfer of Greek *Gnomologia* into Arabic “is naturally the establishment of texts.”⁵³

Until reliable editions of Arabic recensions of the *AP* are available, one can still conclude – based on this chapter’s argument – that Arabic translation of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is a continuation of a long history of revising Christian literature (even in subtle ways) to teach Christian wisdom in another context – as Dahlman argues, in a much earlier time, revisions of Christian literature “were also made by others . . . to adapt texts to new settings: geographical, cultural, social and pedagogical.”⁵⁴

⁵³ Gutas 1975: 436.

⁵⁴ See Dahlman, this volume.

Finally, when seeking to learn the extent of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*'s appropriation by Arab society, it is a responsibility of the scholar to account for his or her intentionality, even latent in the questions we seek to address. Gutas ends his study of Greek *Gnomologia* in Arabic by expressing the "hope that . . . [his] study has demonstrated the importance of the gnomologia for an assessment of the real debt of Islam to Hellenism as a society to a society."⁵⁵ Perhaps it is more charitable not just to measure the debts of the Islamic world to the *Apophthegmata Patrum* for shaping culture, but also to appreciate the creative originality of Arabic translations and compilations of the *AP*, as we appropriate their insights and embark on the current cultural renaissance in the study of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.

⁵⁵ Gutas 1975: 469.

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